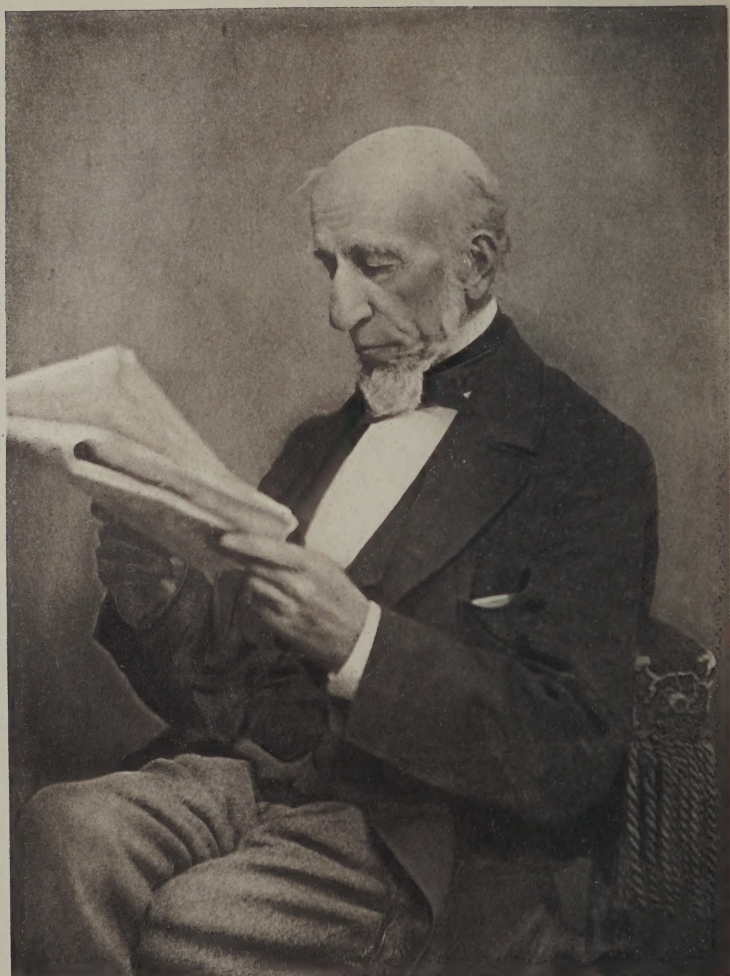


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S. M. Forbes

LETTERS
AND RECOLLECTIONS
OF
JOHN MURRAY FORBES

EDITED BY HIS DAUGHTER
SARAH FORBES HUGHES

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. II.



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
1900

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CONTENTS OF VOLUME II

CHAPTER XIV

MISSION TO ENGLAND

Raising negro regiments, February, 1863. — More trouble with Great Britain. — The Laird rams. — Summoned to New York by Secretaries of the Treasury and Navy. — Drafts instructions to himself and W. H. Aspinwall, signed by Secretary of the Navy. — Undertakes mission to England, and leaves by next steamer. — Ten million dollars in 5-20's intrusted to self and colleague. — Five hundred thousand pounds borrowed from Barings for account of United States government. — Friends' leaders approached. — Difficulties in London caused by Chancellorsville. — Correspondence with Washington officials. — Letter from Mrs. Fanny Kemble 1

CHAPTER XV

THE MISSION AND ITS RESULTS

Trip to the Rhine, June, 1863. — Return to London via Paris. — Friends, acquaintances, and dinner parties in London. — Trip to Aldershot. — Debate in the House of Commons. — Unexpected sympathy. — Letter to Mrs. N. J. Senior. — More correspondence with Washington officials. — Landing in New York with six million dollars in trunks on the eve of the draft riots. — Safe at Brevoort House. — Letters from Mrs. Fanny Kemble, John Bright, and Joshua Bates. — Letter to Thomas Baring. — Letter from C. F. Adams on the rams. — Letters to Charles Sumner and William Rathbone, Jr., on the critical situation. — Letter to Joshua Bates. — Letter from Gideon Welles, closing mission to England 28

CHAPTER XVI

THE COLORED TROOPS

Death of Robert Shaw. — Work in aid of enlistment of colored men. — Letter from Secretary of War. — Mr. Philbrick's work in education of the negroes on Sea Islands. — Building of S. S. Meteor begun (autumn 1863). — Improvement after appointment of General Grant. — Military affairs. — Letter to President on "true issue of existing struggle." — Correspondence with W. Evans on his interview with the President. — Exchange of prisoners; guns. — Letters from England. — Pay of colored troops; letter to W. P. Fessenden, and from C. B. Sedgwick, on subject. — Correspondence with Sumner, Adams, and Sedgwick on the situation. — Shakspeare festival; letter from Emerson. — Proposed postponement of presidential campaign; letter to G. W. Curtis. — Prompt action after Lincoln's nomination. — Laird rams bought by English government; letters from W. Rathbone 67

CHAPTER XVII

THE SUMMER OF 1864

Enrolment bill, July, 1864. — Son William taken prisoner. — War prospects brightening. — Letter to W. P. Fessenden on blockade. — Presidential campaign depressing; letters from Sedgwick and Bryant. — Niagara Falls conference. — Stirring letter to Fox laid before the President. — Work prior to Cooper Union public meeting. — Prospects of political campaign brightening; letter from Sedgwick. — Meeting at Naushon of Goldwin Smith, Emerson, and others. — Extract from Emerson's diary. — Letter from Adams. — Death of Charles Russell Lowell; his life and character. — Appointment of Bigelow as Minister to France. — Correspondence with Fessenden on Secretaryship of the Treasury 96

CONTENTS OF VOLUME II

v

CHAPTER XVIII

A WINTER IN WASHINGTON

Winter in Washington, 1864-65. — Dust and mud. — Story of rebel spy. — Public finance; letter from Thomas Baring. — Strained relations with England; letter from Goldwin Smith. — Thirteenth Amendment passed. — Advocacy of opening of Southern ports. — Correspondence with Governor Andrew on his plans. — Trips down the Potomac; to Cuba and Fort Sumter; raising of the Union flag. — Death of Lincoln. — Correspondence with Gustave de Beaumont. — Grand review. — Return to Milton. — Correspondence with McCulloch, Secretary of the Treasury, and with N. M. Beckwith, on public affairs. — Letters from Gustave de Beaumont, John Bright, and Goldwin Smith. — Fastest railroad trip on record to date, October, 1865 125

CHAPTER XIX

AFTER THE WAR

Public work, 1865 to 1868. — Correspondence with Wendell Phillips on true democracy. — Mission of Assistant Secretary of the Navy to Russia. — Troublesome history of the Meteor. — Death of Governor Andrew; last letter from him; letter from Martin Brimmer. — Correspondence with W. P. Fessenden. — Seward's retirement from office, 1868. — Work on Alabama claims; letter to Mrs. N. J. Senior. — Trip to the Azores. — Letter to Hamilton Fish on Fayal consulate. — Letters from R. W. Emerson on trips to White Mountains and California. — Letter from Florida. — Presidential campaign of 1872. — Letter to Sumner deprecating his support of Greeley 155

CHAPTER XX

RETIREMENT FROM POLITICS. — RAILROADS

General Grant's second term; letter to him on collectorship of Boston. — Need of civil service reform. — Opposition to Grant's third term. — Speech at Faneuil Hall after Hayes's nomination, autumn 1876. — Progress of political corruption. — Death of European correspondents. — Letter from Thomas Hughes. — Garfield campaign, autumn 1880. — Disgust at trickery of political managers. — Stand for proper use of campaign funds; paper on this subject. — State politics. — General Butler's election as governor of Massachusetts, 1882. — Fight against him successful in following year. — Death of Gustavus Fox, 1883. — Retirement from Republican party on Blaine's nomination in 1884. — Letter to chairman of the Independents. — Letter from Judge Hoar. — Railroad management. — Chairman of directors of Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad till death . . 184

CHAPTER XXI

LAST YEARS

Letter to Henry Lee. — Revived interest in ships. — Interest in preserving life at sea; anecdote of his brother, R. B. Forbes. — Advocacy of "free ships;" letter from William Rathbone. — Interest in Russell & Co. and Baring Brothers. — Lessening activity in public affairs. — "Old Scrap Book." — Letters from J. G. Whittier and Mrs. Fanny Kemble. — Pleasant relations with former political allies; letters from Judge Hoar. — Tree-planting and yacht-building; the Wild Duck; letter from Mrs. Fanny Kemble. — Contrivances for horseback riding; active habits and continued interest in others in old age. — Trip to Norfolk in Wild Duck. Last holiday time at Naushon. — Increasing weakness. — Leaving the

CONTENTS OF VOLUME II

vii

island for the last time. — Death in Milton, October 12, 1898	218
--	-----

APPENDIX

Resolutions passed by Board of Directors of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad	239
Paper on Seward's policy	240
INDEX	245

ILLUSTRATIONS

JOHN M. FORBES	<i>Frontispiece</i>
From a photograph by Allen and Rowell in 1881.	
FAC-SIMILE OF INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY, MARCH, 1863	6
JOHN M. FORBES	184
From a photograph on horseback, 1874.	
MAP ILLUSTRATING THE BEGINNING AND GROWTH OF THE CHICAGO, BURLINGTON AND QUINCY RAILROAD, 1856-1898	212

LETTERS AND RECOLLECTIONS
OF
JOHN MURRAY FORBES

CHAPTER XIV

MISSION TO ENGLAND

My father had now entered on the year which was to bring to the country the high-water mark of the war, and to him the climax of his life as a private citizen doing public work. On February 16, 1863, he writes to Mr. Sedgwick in Washington:—

“ You have piped and I have not danced; you have called and I have not come, though my trunk has been packed for ten days. Now I am busy, besides the Second Cavalry, in raising a negro regiment (see circular), also in raising a Union Club, and in various other little ways; but the Second Massachusetts and its young captain will not get off for some six weeks yet (probably), and if you think I can do any good, by coming on, towards pushing up members for any of the great measures of the session, such as I regard the Missouri bill,¹ I will

¹ Abolishing slavery in Missouri and compensating loyal owners.

come almost any day upon getting a telegram or letter from you."

There is no intimation whether or not any journey was made to Washington at this time. Such trips were so frequent as to attract little attention; and all smaller affairs were thrown into the shade by his unexpected voyage to England in the following month.

As the letters to Mr. Senior and others will have shown, what may be called an ugly feeling had been growing up between England and America. From the breaking away of the thirteen colonies, a certain still disdain had marked the attitude of the upper classes of the mother country for all that could be called "Yankee." They were not pleased at the material success of a Republic; and, as to its manners, writers from their class traveling in the New World found all their prepossessions verified, and said so in print; to be answered, on our side, by the jeers of angry and foolish writers, or by things of a very different sort, such as Mr. Lowell's delightful article, "On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners."

On the other hand, these English travelers found some manna in the wilderness; *e. g.* in life as they saw it in the houses of the large slave-owners of the Southern States. These Southern men, the richer of whom were educated abroad or at the North, had sometimes an air of authority and a surface of refinement which pleased their visitors. They belonged to a ruling class here, and natural affinity

drew them to the ruling class in England. They fêted the English guest; he was passed on from one great plantation to another, found his hosts delightful, and slavery the only possible condition for the negro; and in due course rose-colored pictures of the planter's life appeared in the London "Times," and in books of travel.

Then came the rebellion of the Southern States; and just when the sympathy of the English people with an anti-slavery cause might be called on to offset the prejudices of which I have spoken, and those of the merchant and manufacturer threatened with a cotton famine, Mr. Seward announced, in effect, that slavery had nothing to do with secession.

Looking back now, the wonder seems to be that Bright, Cobden, and other liberals should have seen clearly the real question at issue, and that the Lancashire and Yorkshire mechanics, the worst sufferers by the cotton famine, should have backed them up in their stanch support of the Union cause from beginning to end of the war.

It was no wonder that the "upper classes" in England should have closed their eyes to the real significance of the fact that the slave States were ranged on one side and the free States on the other, and should have accepted as gospel what our Secretary of State gave out to the world. Nor was it surprising that the government should have winked at the fitting out of the Alabama from an English port to prey upon "Yankee" commerce. But the time had now come when this willful blindness

seemed likely to lead to an even more serious injury. The British ministry were refusing to see what was patent to all the rest of the world, that the two iron-clad rams nearly completed at the Lairds' yard in Liverpool were meant for the Confederate States, and that if they or any similar craft were allowed to get out and raise the blockade of the Southern ports, it meant war between the two countries. The gravity of the crisis, however, was fully apparent to the government in Washington ; and so it came about that my father, together with his old friend, Mr. W. H. Aspinwall, who had joined him in planning the relief of Fort Sumter at the beginning of the war, was sent to England charged with a mission, on the careful conduct of which might depend the preservation of peace between England and America. It was a serious matter for him ; his whole heart was in the strife at home, and as it turned out he must absent himself from the first wedding among his children.¹ His first intimation of what was to come was given in the following telegram from the Secretary of the Treasury :—

NEW YORK, *March 14, 1863.*

TO JOHN M. FORBES, Boston, Mass. :

Oblige me by coming to New York, Fifth Avenue Hotel, to-night. I desire to confer with you on important business immediately. Answer.

S. P. CHASE.

¹ Mary Hathaway Forbes married Henry Sturgis Russell, colonel of the Fifth Massachusetts Cavalry, May 6, 1863.

This was received by him at Milton early on the same (Saturday) morning. Though not well at the time, he could not refuse such a request; he telegraphed a simple "Yes," and the next morning met at the Fifth Avenue Hotel Mr. Chase, Mr. Welles, the Secretary of the Navy, who had come up with him from Washington for the interview, and his old friend, Mr. Aspinwall.

The Secretaries wished my father to go at once to England, and Mr. Aspinwall to follow him with ten millions of 5-20 government bonds, which were just being prepared for issue to the public, so soon as this amount of them could be countersigned. With the proceeds they were, if possible, to stop the outfit of Confederate cruisers, and especially of the iron-clad rams.

They agreed to go, and were asked to draw up their own instructions for Mr. Welles's signature, which my father proceeded to do as follows:¹—

NEW YORK, *March 16, 1863.*

Mem°. Instructions from the Navy Department to Messrs. W. H. Aspinwall and J. M. Forbes.

You will receive credits from the Treasury Department, which will enable you to use for the purposes of these orders £1,000,000 sterling. This, or any part of it, you will use at your discretion, to buy any vessels, or a majority interest therein, built

¹ I give a facsimile of the original document, in my father's handwriting, with the Secretary's signature and his own and Mr. Aspinwall's initials attached.

or building in England or elsewhere, for war purposes. Your first object will be to secure such vessels as are most likely to be used by the insurgents and to be most dangerous in their hands. Your next object will be to get such as will be most useful to us, whenever it becomes possible and expedient to get them to some home port or friendly port where we can get possession of them. If in your opinion clearly expedient, you may send such vessels to such points, but you will endeavor to avoid establishing a precedent that may embarrass our minister when urging the British government to stop the sailing of vessels belonging to the rebels.

You will note that there may be vessels building, which, without being perfectly adapted to war purposes, are still so fast and have such capacity for a moderate armament, that they threaten to become dangerous to our commerce. In such cases, you must use your best judgment as to purchasing any of them. It may in some cases be expedient to secure a majority interest or a lien upon vessels instead of buying the whole, provided you feel sure that you can thus prevent their being fitted out by the rebels.

You may also be obliged to hold your title to all the vessels by a lien. Our main object is to prevent the rebels using these vessels, rather than the expectation of getting much valuable service from the vessels at present.

You will use your discretion as to how long you will pursue this experiment, and will relinquish it

New March 16/63

Mem^o Instruction from the Navy

Despatch to the Hon. Mr. Applegate & Mr. B. C.

Wherein it becomes possible & expedient to
get them to some port or friendly port where
we can get possession of them.

If in your opinion clearly expedient, you
may send such vessel to such points but you
will endeavor to avoid establishing a precedent

Wm March 16/63

Mem^o Instruction from the Navy
Depart to Messrs W. Harpinson & M. T. T. T.
You will receive credit from the Navy Dept
which will enable you to use for the purposes
of these Orders £1,000,000. 5s. This or any
part of it, you will use at your discretion
to buy any vessel, or a majority interest therein,
built or building in England or elsewhere, for
war purposes. Your first object will be to
✓ Secure such vessels as are most likely to be
✓ used by the insurgents & to be most dangerous
in their hands. Your next object will be to
get such as will be most useful to us
wherever it becomes possible & expedient to
get them to some ^{Rome} port or friendly port where
we can get possession of them.

If in your opinion clearly expedient, you
may send such vessels to such points but you
will endeavor to avoid establishing a precedent

that may embarrass our Minister when
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You may also be obliged to hold your
title to all the vessels by a lien
Our main object is to prevent

the Rebels using these vessels - rather
than the expectation of getting much
valuable service from the vessels at
present

You will use your discretion as to how
long you will pursue this experiment
& will relinquish it whenever you think
no farther good likely to come of it
or when directed by the Navy Department

You will have letters of introduction
to the Consuls at Liverpool & London
& will get every information from them
but will finally use your own judgment
upon the merits of each case

William Miller

Very

J. N. F.
W. H. A.

whenever you think no further good likely to come of it, or when directed by the Navy Department.

You will have letters of introduction to the consuls at Liverpool and London, and will get every information from them, but will finally use your own judgment upon the merits of each case.

GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary*.

J. M. F.

W. H. A.

Then, under the same date, comes a formal letter to them, also signed by Mr. Welles, inclosing one to Messrs. Baring Bros. from Mr. Chase, advising them of Messrs. W. H. Aspinwall and J. M. Forbes's authority to arrange with them for the loan of a million sterling, on security of the ten million dollars 5-20 bonds; referring to instructions and suggesting that Messrs. Aspinwall and Forbes should confer on their arrival in England with the United States consuls at Liverpool and London.

My father writes in his notes, "The whole thing was so sudden that, as I find from files of that period, I had, on the eve of my departure, to settle by telegraph to San Francisco the details of the shipment of Massachusetts men recruited in California which I had undertaken to arrange."

He left by the next Wednesday's steamer, on March 18, from Boston. On arrival in England, his first visit, after that to Consul Dudley, was to Mr. William Rathbone, then the junior of that name, but now the senior, in a direct line of seven

William Rathbones, who have succeeded each other as merchants and public men in that city. He had met my father years before in America and now received him warmly, and was found by him "full of the soundest views as to the interest and duty of the British government to put down the outfitting of cruisers against us." He was also welcomed by Mr. Dudley, whom he found to be an abolitionist and enthusiast, and of whom he writes, "He of course told me all he had done in the way of espial¹ and all he wanted to do; and after giving him some small help for immediate use, and discussing the plans for future operations, when Aspinwall with his expert captain and larger funds should arrive, I passed on to London. . . . My first visit was to my good friend Joshua Bates, the American partner of Baring Bros. & Co., who, with Tom Baring, ruled the house. The primitive methods of these elder partners were very striking. In their inner den, at Bishopsgate Street, each wrote and pressed his important private letters with great care and labor. From policy I gave them (as they wished) a very limited sketch of my plans. They were already the financial agents of the United States, but this limited them to small disbursements, and perhaps credits and salaries of consuls, and other such outlays; and when I suggested, as a first want, that they should put at my disposal £500,000, for which they were to have

¹ Made necessary by Lord John Russell's dictum that positive proof must be furnished before his government would interfere.—ED.

perhaps \$4,000,000 of 5-20's as security, it required some consideration. The terms and methods were written out in private conclave by the two seniors, and I left them to go and look up our minister, Charles Francis Adams. . . . He wanted to know only what was absolutely necessary of our mission, so that he might not be mixed up with our operations, which we knew might not be exactly what a diplomat would care to indorse. I found Mr. Adams in much the same condition as Consul Dudley,— his pecuniary advances stretched as far as he dared to go ; and he warmly rejoiced in having us to stand behind the consuls in their operations. He was very gracious and threw open his house to me on all occasions during my stay."

Of what happened on his return to the Barings' office my father writes : —

"Mr. Bates was the best of Americans and he was always for the strongest measures. His consultation with Mr. Baring resulted in their handing me a bank book with £500,000 at my credit, subject to cash draft, and so when Aspinwall arrived, a week later, our finances were all right, and he deposited the 5-20's in Baring's vaults, part as security for the money and the rest subject to our orders."

And the notes continue : —

"Coming off in a hurry, I had still had time to send, through my wife and others, and get credentials to the English Quakers (more properly 'Friends'), whose May meetings were to take place

in London and whose help it was considered necessary to invoke in the interests of peace. In due time a large batch of introductions reached me, and I spent about a week, early in May, dancing attendance upon our broad-brimmed friends."

He then tells of his having addressed the following letter to Joseph Pease, president, and Joseph Bevan Braithwaite and Robert Forster, members of the Peace Society and leaders among the Friends : —

LONDON, *May* 26, 1863.

GENTLEMEN, — My purpose in asking introductions to Friends in this country was to bring to your attention the danger of hostile relations, and even of war, between our two kindred nations, and to beg you to apply your accustomed practical wisdom to finding means of averting the evil.

You are already aware of the serious although smaller evil which has been made public, namely : —

Swift steamers have been fitted out in your ports, manned by your own seamen, with a full knowledge of the warlike objects of the voyage, but not at first armed with cannon. Another British vessel, with guns and ammunition, and additional men, meets them on your coast, or in some neighboring port, and in a few days they commence the destruction of American ships — often laden with British property.

The Law of Nations is necessarily indefinite ; but it is generally held, that no armed ship becomes a legal cruiser until she has received her commission in one of the ports of the power which authorizes

her warlike proceedings ; and even then, that she cannot condemn her prizes until each case has been adjudicated before a court of law. Notwithstanding the illegality of the proceedings of these cruisers, your government has not stopped their course of destruction, and they are afforded the hospitalities of your colonial ports, without which their career of mischief would soon terminate. Judging of the future by the past, and also by the information which I receive from authentic sources, there is no doubt that other similar expeditions are in course of preparation ; and that from time to time the course of irritation will be continued, by which the slaveholders and their agents hope to produce a war between our country and yours. This is probably their object, rather than the mere destruction of property. Thanks to Bright, and Forster, and Cobden, and Monckton Milnes, and other noble spirits, in Parliament and out of it, a marked improvement has taken place in public opinion, which has strengthened your government in its efforts to prevent further expeditions ; but the work is only half done ; the danger is still great. Now we all hope that peace may, through the efforts of good and wise men on both sides of the water, be kept between us, in spite of these expeditions.

Another consideration has great weight, namely, if your government practically establish the precedent that a neutral may evade the technicalities of a Foreign Enlistment Act, and that vessels so evading the local law may at once become legal

cruisers, entitled to capture enemies' property and dispose of it without adjudication, your next war after we are at peace will probably see the ocean covered with foreign-built cruisers, who will do, on a larger scale, against your rich commerce exactly what the *Alabama* is now doing; and will at the same time give an impetus to commerce, under our neutral flag, far greater than that with which your shipowners are now bribed. When that evil day comes, you will go to war for the protection of your commerce.

I have thus far only mentioned the lesser danger; but a far greater one threatens us.

By the inclosed copy of the intercepted correspondence of the slaveholders' government,¹ you will see the statement of their so-called Secretary of the Navy, that months ago "they had contracted for six ironclad vessels in Great Britain."

I cannot now give you legal proof that these ships are building here, but a very little shrewd inquiry will convince you of the fact; at least two of these ironclads are building at Liverpool, one of which might be launched within a few weeks. These two ships are known to be of the most formidable character, and equal, except in size, to the best ironclads belonging to your government. If they are allowed to go to sea, we might either have our harbors obstructed, or our cities burned!

¹ A letter referring to the Confederates having contracted for six ironclad steamers in England, urging dispatch, and speaking of "the cotton to be delivered in liquidation of these contracts." — ED.

They may not take in their guns at Liverpool ; but, as in other cases, a British steamer can meet them on your coast, and dispatch them fully armed upon their errand of death ; having thus evaded the technicalities of your law.

Now it is plain that your nation and ours cannot live in peace if you permit such engines of destruction to be sent from your harbors against us. The law of nations and the common sense of mankind will decide that it is your business to see that your local laws are made sufficient to carry out your international obligations. We did so under Washington without any statute law ; we afterwards amended our law, when in your Canadian rebellion we found it insufficient. Whatever may be thought of the maintenance of peace, under a continuance of the privateers outfitting against our commerce, if the ironclads go out against our cities, peace between us is hardly possible.

You may think that the possibility of war is a mere dream. So reasoned too many of our people, North and South, when the causes of our war were ripening. Wars come from passion and from want of forecast more often than from the interests of either party.

I have laid before you the danger ; I now entreat you to apply the remedy in your own good way, but without delay.

If I have dwelt upon the material and national consideration of the subject too much, I beg you to believe that it is only because I feel that it would

be unnecessary to appeal to your well-known abhorrence of any war, and especially of a war between the two nations of the earth who, when our country is once freed from the stain of slavery, ought to stand shoulder to shoulder before the world to uphold peace on earth and freedom to all men.

With great respect, your friend and servant,
J. M. FORBES.

The leaders then furnished him with this certificate : —

MAINTENANCE OF PEACE WITH AMERICA.

The writer of the following letter, John M. Forbes, a well-known merchant of Boston, North America, is fully accredited as a gentleman entitled to all confidence and respect by letters from Samuel Boyd Tobey, of Providence, to Joshua Forster; Thomas Evans, of Philadelphia, to James B. Braithwaite and Richard Fry; Matthew Howland, of New Bedford, to Joshua Pease; Thomas Kimber, Jr., to Henry Pease, M. P.; and Thomas Evans to Robert Forster, etc., etc. We, the undersigned, commend the important subjects treated upon to the serious attention of our friends.

ROBERT FORSTER.

ROBERT ALSOP.

GEORGE STURGE.

LONDON, 26th of 5th Month, 1863.

Armed with this, he attended a meeting of "their prominent members, at a lunch given at Overend

& Gurney's office," and read his letter to them; but its argument found them so "cautious and hard of hearing" as to leave him with the impression that his labor was wasted.

Meanwhile the outlook in America was not cheering. It is clear from the following letter to Governor Andrew, that he had a foreboding of the bad news which was presently to make his work in London doubly trying:—

J. M. FORBES TO GOVERNOR ANDREW.

LONDON, *May* 20, 1863.

MY DEAR GOVERNOR,—I have your long and interesting letter of Tuesday, May 5, with hopeful views of Hooker's battle. God grant they may have been realized, though his situation seemed critical at last accounts. I have just had Mr. Bright to breakfast, and have since seen Cobden. I tell them both that either a great success or a great disaster will stir up our people, and if they hear to-morrow that Hooker is driven back, it will only mean that it will bring out our people. Like the pine-tree, it may be said of the North:—

"The firmer it roots him,
The harder it blows."

I only wish I were at home to do my share there, if the news is black; but my work here is but half done, and I can only give you my good wishes and my children.

How you would like John Bright! He is a

man after your own pattern, — genial, warm-hearted, frank. I am busy just now trying to see the Quakers, and to bring them up to the mark of doing something for peace, by petitioning for the suppression of ironclads and other Confederate pirates.

Cobden is confident the ironclads will not be allowed to go out, and they have certainly checked up the work upon them. I think the case looks better, but still the calm seems to me too uncertain to trust to. I would avail of it to prepare for the possible storm. I note what you say of guns. I hope you observe in the prices sent you the very extravagant ones are for all steel, which are deemed unnecessary. The Russians take iron spindles and steel jackets. I fear our army and navy are a little too much governed by those most excellent riders of their hobbies, — Rodman and Dahlgren, for whom I have the greatest possible respect; but you must not forget that to pierce an ironclad you need velocity of shot, which cannot be had with your cast-iron guns; they will not stand the powder. Sumter drove off our ironclads with Blakely guns and round steel shot. Benzon and I, as I wrote you before, have gone in for two ten-and-three-quarter, and one nine-inch gun, cast-iron spindle, steel jacket, which will cost £1000, £1000, and £750, more or less. If you decide not to have them, I hope you will say so, and we shall try to resell them here with as little loss as possible. If only as patterns, it seems to me you ought to have them.

Yours truly,

J. M. FORBES.

The bad news of Chancellorsville came surely enough, and of what followed he writes : —

“It was necessary then to keep a stiff upper lip, and to be, and appear to be, ready to meet whatever might betide, for it was indeed socially a very chilly climate that spring in London. Our best friends, with a very small circle excepted, were only with us in feeling, and lamented that we should approve of continuing the bloody contest instead of letting the ‘erring sisters go in peace,’¹ as many on both sides at first wished. I especially recall one dinner party given me by my good friend, Mr. Russell Scott, to meet some of these sympathizing friends. Among the guests was the Rev. James Martineau, who, with the rest, could see no good in prolonging the ‘fratricidal contest.’ The subject of the Chancellorsville defeat, the news of which had just been received, of course chiefly absorbed our attention, and led to many chilly remarks as to the folly of protracting the useless struggle to save the Union, all meant for my especial benefit, and having the effect of pouring very cold water upon a volcano covered with a thin layer of snow. I listened with the cold outside manners of good society to all the stuff, but simmering internally like the aforesaid Vesuvius, until my patience fairly gave way. In one of the pauses which all dinner parties experience, our host ap-

¹ Intended probably as a quotation of a famous expression of the period, from a letter of General Scott to Secretary Seward, dated 3 March, 1861, “Say to the seceded States, — ‘Wayward sisters, depart in peace.’” — ED.

pealed to me for information as to the truth of the sad, heart-rending rumor that the hero, Stonewall Jackson, had been killed by his own soldiers on the evening of the rebel attack, and at the most critical period of the whole battle? With a hesitating voice, under the boiling feelings which had been aroused by the sentimental stuff which had been uttered, I replied, 'I don't know or care a brass farthing whether Jackson was killed by his own men or ours, so long as he is thoroughly killed, and stands no longer in the way of that success upon which the fate of everybody and everything I care for depends!' Had a naked Indian in war-paint, with tomahawk and scalping-knife, appeared at the dinner-table, the expression of horror and dismay at my barbarous utterance could hardly have been greater; but anyhow we heard no more that evening about the wisdom of concession to the 'erring sisters,' and their chivalrous heroes and lamented leaders.

"Bright, Cobden, W. E. Forster, the Duke of Argyle, and a few others were with us heartily, and took bold ground in our cause; but, generally speaking, the aristocracy and the trading classes were solid against us. Gladstone, the magnificent old man of to-day, had not found out the merits of our cause, and Lord John Russell, called a liberal member of the cabinet, was with official insolence sneering even in a public speech at what he called the 'once United' States. Among the merchants I only remember as unconditional friends Tom Baring

and William Rathbone, Jr., William Evans,¹ and Tom Potter.²

“Among the notabilities in London society at that time was my old friend, Nassau Senior, the political economist, who has left behind him the most amusing sketches of the present century, and was then, as usual, full of gossip upon political subjects. One morning, while dressing, I heard his step in my parlor, and found he had looked in for the morning’s news. I told him it was not so very bad, that the defeat of Chancellorsville would only rouse up the Northern people, and that the next thing he would hear would be of another Northern army; and that we had no idea of any other termination than putting down the rebellion, and should only fight the harder for this temporary check; so he went off. Going presently to a breakfast party which was given to Bright, Cobden, and others, by Mr. Aspinwall, one of the party was called out to interview Mr. Senior, and brought back my own brilliant picture of Federal prospects of the early morning, which he gave as the latest that had been received. I recognized the source at once, and have no doubt that it went, early as it was in the day, just where I meant it should, — to Lord Palmerston and his circle, where Mr. Senior moved freely. I need hardly say that I kept my counsel as to the

¹ A member of the Anti-Corn-Law-League, and a friend of Cobden; interested in English and American railroads. — ED.

² President of “The Union and Emancipation Society,” formed in England during the war to influence public opinion in favor of the Union cause, and largely supported by Mr. Potter himself. — ED.

secret of that mysterious, underground, telegraphic news until I had Aspinwall, Cobden, and Bright for my only auditors."

I here give some of the official and unofficial correspondence carried on by him with the Washington officials: —

J. M. FORBES TO S. P. CHASE, SECRETARY OF THE
TREASURY.

LONDON, *March 31, 1863.*

. . . I am glad, however, to find in some quarters a theory, that while the government here, and their special pleader, the Attorney-General, have so defended themselves against claims for damages, and also against criticism in the Alabama case, by all sorts of special pleading and sophistry, they are not going to lay themselves open to the same charge again.

If they will only do better with the vessels now fitting out against us, we must try to forgive their past sins, for the time. I am trying to hunt up some evidence that this theory is well founded, and, if confirmed, I will write by next mail.

If we can only tide over the time until we occupy Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, and the mouth of the Rio Grande, we shall avert the complication of another war upon our hands, — now the last hope of the rebels. . . .

TO THE SAME.

LONDON, *April 1, 1863.*

MY DEAR SIR, — . . . Our consul tells me that among the developments reached in searching evidence against privateers, this one is clear, that the robbers' object in pushing that expedient is chiefly to get us into difficulty with England ! To this end their efforts are directed here far more than to the mere injury of our commerce. We must not play their game for them by issuing letters of marque. . . ."

J. M. FORBES TO GIDEON WELLES, SECRETARY OF THE
NAVY.

LONDON, *April 1, 1863.*

. . . The rebel loan, although much of a bubble, got up by the foxes, already in the trap, who have lost their tails, and want others to follow their bright examples, is still to a certain extent a successful swindle, and it gives the enemy new life. Still I have reason to hope that it only pays off old scores, having been negotiated at 60, by takers, chiefly creditors, it is supposed, who are now swindling the green ones in their foul bargain. This gives the enemy £1,800,000 to square the score and begin a new one ; but it does not prove conclusively that they can pay for their ironclads, especially the one at Glasgow, which we are taking measures to investigate. . . .

It occurs to me as within the spirit of our orders, though not the letter, in case we get a dangerous

blockade runner, to put on board cargo useful to us, cover her up carefully, and send her under a sharp captain to Nassau, where she might get valuable information, and then run into the arms of our squadron, if still outside of Charleston ; and perhaps bring along with her some of her Confederate friends to help her run the blockade. I throw this out for your consideration. It may be too dangerous a game to play, but might, if well played, double her value by giving us some of her infernal Confederates ! The worst of it is, I fear, that it requires many to be in the secret. I write Secretary Chase upon financial matters.

G. V. FOX, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY, TO
J. M. FORBES.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *April 1, 1863.*

I have your letter from near Halifax. Every steamer we capture that will carry one gun is invariably taken by the department and sent to the blockade. The Atlantic and Baltic are pretty nearly gone, boilers entirely so. The old Cunarders have not the speed. Earl Russell has written a letter to our government (received yesterday) which, in plain English, is this: "We have a right to make and sell. We are merchants; we sell to whoever will buy; you can buy as well as the South. We do not ask any questions of our purchasers. We shall not hound down our own industry. We are not responsible for anything. You can make the most of it."

We infer from this bombshell that the govern-

ment would be glad to have the South get out these ironclads, and that they will not afford us any aid. You can act accordingly. You must stop them at all hazards, as we have no defense against them. Let us have them in the United States for our own purposes, without any more nonsense, and at any price. As to guns, we have not one in the whole country fit to fire at an ironclad. If you dispose of their ironclads, we will take care of the whole Southern concern; and it depends solely upon your action in this matter; and if you have the opportunity to get them, I hope you will not wait for any elaborate instructions.

It is a question of life and death. Charleston will be attacked within ten days, and I hope we shall strengthen you with successes in other quarters. The Georgiana is disposed of.

Regards to Mr. A.

GIDEON WELLES, SECRETARY OF THE NAVY, TO
J. M. FORBES.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, *18th April*, 1863.

Your two favors of the 27th ult. and 1st inst. were duly received. We have been and are extra busy in consequence of results at Charleston,¹ etc., so that I seize a moment this Saturday evening to acknowledge them.

I do not believe it expedient to purchase ma-

¹ Probably referring to the attack on Fort Sumter, on the 7th of April, when the Union fleet under Admiral Dupont had had to retire discomfited. — Ed.

chinery as suggested, nor do I think it advisable to buy either of 'the Cunarders.

If we can prevent the formidable craft which is being got up for the "Emperor of China" from getting into rebel hands, or get hold of any swift privateers which they are constructing or fitting out, the great purpose of your mission will have been accomplished. I am not over-sanguine of success in this matter, and shall not experience deep disappointment at your failure, — assisted as I know the rebels are by British neutrality as well as by British capital. There may be some fortunate contingency to aid you, but I do not rely upon it. When you left I had strong hopes that the English government might interfere to prevent the semi-piratical rovers from going abroad. Beyond any government or people on earth, it is the interest, and should be the policy, of Great Britain to maintain the police of the seas. She has so thought, and acted heretofore. If in encouraging, or acquiescing in the policy of sending abroad from her shores, these pirate steamers to prey upon the commerce of a friendly nation, we are to understand there is a change of policy, there is no country that will suffer more. With her immense commerce, and dependent colonies spread over the globe, she would be ruined by retaliatory measures. I have no doubt that it is a primary object with the rebel agents, enemies, and sympathizers, to create a misunderstanding between us and England, and hence forbearance, to its utmost limit, is with us a virtue.

On the subject of letters of marque, our views coincide, and I think will prevail, unless we shall be compelled to resist other Alabamas and Floridas, by letting loose similar vessels which may depredate on the commerce of that country, which, under the rebel flag, is devastating ours.

We have an impression that but limited means will be derived from the loan recently negotiated, yet it may for the moment give them some credit. The statement of Mr. Laird in Parliament that propositions had been made to him to build vessels for the United States is destitute of truth. Certainly nothing of the kind has ever come from me, directly or indirectly, nor from the Navy Department during my administration of its affairs; and there is no other branch of the government authorized or possessed of means to make such a proposition. All appropriations for constructing or purchasing naval vessels are by Congress confided to the Navy Department. I am therefore compelled to believe that Mr. L. states what he knew to be false to relieve himself in difficulty.

Perhaps it may be advisable to expose Mr. Laird, though of that you can best judge. Ordinarily I take little notice of false partisan statements, but an exhibition of the low moral standard of the rebel agents may not be without a beneficial influence on the British mind at this moment.

I am glad you have encouraged Mr. Dudley, our excellent and vigilant consul at Liverpool, to persevere in legal measures. . . .

. . . What we want is to prevent the rebels from getting out dangerous vessels ; and if it means a necessity to buy and leave them, so be it. We would have neither you nor the government compromised by any illegal proceedings.

Our ironclad monitors proved their powers of resistance at Charleston, and for harbor defense and assault are a success. But we want chasers, — fast sailers for cruising, and must and will have them. The suggestion in regard to blockade runners, if successful, would, like almost every success, have great and general approval, but it would be attended with many difficulties. With regards to Mr. Aspinwall, and hoping to hear from you often, [etc., etc.].

It was considered wisest for the secrecy of the mission that my father should be absent from London for a time ; and he chose the Rhine for his place of diversion. Amidst all this official correspondence, it was pleasant and cheering, just before leaving for Germany, to hear from his old friend, Mrs. Fanny Kemble. She writes : —

I had a long talk with Lord Clarendon on Thursday evening about American affairs, and found him, I am sorry to say, much less just in his notions upon them than that nice man, his dead brother-in-law, Cornwall Lewis, was. I sent him (Lord Clarendon) yesterday morning a fair and accurate account of the whole origin of the quarrel and present state

of the struggle; but if one of our cabinet ministers has yet to learn anything upon either subject, it is a shame and a pity! That fellow, —, the “Times’s” worthy correspondent from the South, who was a defaulter on the turf here, you know, is a nephew of Lord —’s, and connected with our great people; and the wicked trumpery he writes, both privately and in the “Times,” is a fruitful source of mischief on the subject. I am happy to say that Lord Clarendon gave the “Times” its deserts for the mischievous course it has pursued towards America in its devilish “leading articles.” That paper *will* lose its influence, if the feeling once gains ground that it is absolutely dishonest and unprincipled, as well as the cleverest paper in the world.

Good-by. I am glad you are coming back soon; the sight of you carries me to Milton Hill, and refreshes my heart and soul.

Always affectionately yours,

FANNY KEMBLE.

P. S. Your former friend, formerly captain, now Admiral Charles Elliot, is brother to my friend of the colonial office, and has just been made governor of St. Helena.

CHAPTER XV

THE MISSION AND ITS RESULTS

IN getting away from London at this time, my father had real enjoyment in his first and only view of the Rhine. He writes to his wife at Milton : —

STEAMER, *June 9, 1863.*

At nine, through much tribulation, and feeling like an unprotected female in the streets of London, I reached Bingen, "sweetest flower of the Rhine." Amid a shower of gutturals, I found myself alone as the train moved off, and could only respond with the sesame of "Hotel Victoria," which, after due German delay, brought me a broad-lipped porter, who took my bag and shawl, and marched me off to the Victoria, dumb to all else. A supper, served by a half-English waiter in a hall much like our White-Mountain-tavern-dining-room, and a decent bed, kept me till 5 A. M., and then, with a cup of coffee, I started to return on my winding way by boat — a wonderful cross of the Dutch galliot, the river raft, and the steamer. I found Bingen to be the northern extremity of the Rhine Highlands, as if you had stopped just above Newburgh (Hudson), — the Rhine being the Hudson, a little variegated by

robbers' castles. Now I am as if below the Palisades (Hudson), in the flat country, having fed on the picturesque mentally, and the Rhine wine and cutlets physically, and being now at leisure from both appetites.

One or two of the sights I have seen would pay for the journey, for they carry one back to the Middle Ages here, as Kenilworth or Warwick do in England. At each bend of the river, and it bends constantly, you find a robbers' nest commanding it, and generally some valley leading down to it. Some few of these are very beautiful: all are picturesque, whether in ruins, as most of them are, or well preserved. The most beautiful is one on the left or east bank, two hours by steamer below Bingen, — an old castle, well preserved, nestled in a valley which protects it from the east and north, hills rising above it and falling from the base of its towers to the river; hills too steep for culture, so that the castle stands embowered, perched on the hillside, with its round, minaret-looking towers and battlements. Its architectural beauty seems to me exquisite, so bright and graceful; and its surroundings set it off like a gem in the right place.

Then you come to little robber houses, covering less ground than our house, that reminded one of Christie's tower in the "Black Dwarf," a tower and some sort of outhouse walled in. These are always in ruins; and you have every variation from this, up to the grand castle of Ehrenbreitstein, opposite Coblenz. The general style of these rascals was,

however, to seize some point commanding the river, and a side valley leading to it. They all mark the bird of prey, just as the claws and sharp beak do ; no ground near them for food, no trees for shelter. Sometimes it takes my glass to make out the ruin. Sometimes the rock goes up to such peaks that you need a glass to know there is not a ruined castle there. Sometimes the castle is low down, right on the river, with its battlemented walls cut through now by the railroad ; more often, perched half way up on the shoulder of a hill ; almost always a threat, seldom a place of home-like beauty and shelter. Rocks (limestone) often too steep for aught but the bushes which, in living green, now cover them ; but wherever there is a chance to terrace, you find little nooks and vineyards.

When you come to Ehrenbreitstein, you have a noble castle, still defensible. Now we are coming to hills less steep and generally vine-covered, but still terraced. None picturesque, like the pine-clad hills of the Adirondacks. Leave out the ruins, and we have many finer sights than the Rhine ; but with these, and a heart in tune, I can imagine the enthusiasm of Byron and Bulwer. I have enjoyed it, partly as a rest in the midst of my life of keen anxiety, and more for not expecting any pleasure beforehand. A couple of Germans came on board who spoke no English or French, and who kindly tried, in deep and frantic gutturals, to convey to me their appreciation of the Rhine beauties. I had to shake my head in despair, and turn to my own fountains of inspiration.

He visited Amsterdam and Brussels on his way to London, chiefly with the view of learning what prospect there was of disposing of fifty millions of 5-20 bonds, which, apart from their other mission, Mr. Chase had empowered Mr. Aspinwall and himself to negotiate for the United States government. I may say, in passing, that financial opinion in England and on the continent at that time, as to the United States' prospects, made any such negotiation out of the question during their stay. At Paris they "had a very nice flat and entertained their friends in a quiet way;" and it may be guessed that they returned to London refreshed by their continental experiences.

To take up the story again in London, my father writes:—

"Among my London acquaintances was Mr. Edward Ellis, a member of Parliament himself, and, I think, with one or two sons also in that body. He was a friend and adherent of Palmerston, and, having a pecuniary interest in land on this side, was supposed to be very well posted about American affairs. It was just at the time the controversy was going on about the letter-bag of a steamer; it had been seized with the vessel, carrying a cargo of munitions of war, nominally to Mexico, but undoubtedly intended for the Texan rebels. The bag must have contained proof of this, but, being under the seals of the British post-office, was claimed by the British minister as sacred, and the dispute was going on as to what should be done with it; the condem-

nation of the vessel and cargo, amounting to a very large sum, depending a great deal upon the result. I was dining at Mr. Ellis's, and while we were standing before the fire, waiting for dinner to be announced, two or three of the younger members of Parliament came in and announced the 'good news' that the letter-bags had been given up without being opened, which removed the danger of a rupture in the friendly relations between the United States and Great Britain. This was all very polite, Mr. Adams being present, and, as usual, silent. I could not help, however, saying a word to this effect: 'I am very glad you like the news; but I hope you will remember one thing, that you are making a precedent which, in the long future, we intend to follow. You are now ready to introduce all possible privileges for neutrals in the carrying trade, but in the long run Great Britain is at war ten years while we are likely to be one; and whatever precedent you set now, we shall hold you to.'"

On the other hand, he met, occasionally, unexpected sympathizers: — "Among the notable men that I met was an Hon. Mr. Berkeley, a queer little old man, who was known in Parliament as 'single speech Berkeley,' and who every year brought up some radical proposition which was good-naturedly received and passed over, out of regard for his aristocratic connections and influence. I sat next him at a dinner given me by Captain Blakely, the gun-maker, and, with the usual reserve which I had to maintain in that hostile atmosphere, I said very little

except upon general subjects; but as we were putting on our coats before going off, little Mr. Berkeley shook hands with me very warmly and said, 'I hope you understand that I am entirely with you in your fight to put down the slaveholders.' "

There were also other "times of refreshment" to relieve the general tension, such as a trip he took with General Forbes, of the Bombay army (said to have broken a Sepoy square with his regiment of cavalry), whom he had come to know through Mr. Ashburner. Of this he writes: —

"General Forbes was a very good-looking, middle-aged man at that time, and was very polite to me, taking me down to Aldershot to see a review of the British volunteers. We lunched with the mess, and then went to the field, where there was a great display of troops, and where I saw many celebrities of the Crimean war and the Indian mutiny. The review wound up with a sham fight, in the midst of which I had to start by cab to catch the train back to London to keep an engagement in the evening. The cabman at first refused to cross the field of battle, but under bribe or threat I managed to get him down to run the gauntlet of the advancing line, going between them and their objective point with the horse on the jump and the whole line apparently firing at us. It had all the effect of a real battle, — except the lead."

But these dissipations had not diverted his mind from business; and one plan which occurred to him for giving an object-lesson to France and England

at the same time is remembered by him as follows: —

“One project which we thought of at this time might have turned into great results if the Mexicans had had any minister or recognized agent in London. They were at open war with France, and it occurred to us that, if they would do towards France exactly what the rebel cruisers were doing against us, we should bring the European powers to a realizing sense of their misdeeds towards us. We discussed the question, and thought of lending to Mexico a few thousand dollars out of our resources to enable them to fit out cruisers in English ports to go into the Channel and destroy French ships, and to return to British ports to coal and recruit and get ready for other depredations; in fact repeating what was being done in British neutral ports against the United States. If some morning a Mexican cruiser had put into Plymouth after destroying a lot of French ships, the replies of the British Foreign Secretary to a powerful, warlike nation like France would have been very different from what they were saying to us, hampered as we were with our internal war; and, if they had treated France as they did us, war would have been the consequence in about twenty-four hours. But there was no Mexican minister or agent, and we could do nothing.”

At this time occurred his one and only experience of an English funeral, an account of which he gives as follows: —

“We were surprised at the house by being deco-

rated in most wonderful crape round our hats, and heavy silk scarfs reaching almost to our feet, which were put over us by one of the servants, as we were to play the part of chief mourners. After the religious ceremonies at the house, we were ushered into carriages decorated in the same wonderful manner, and slowly drove through the streets, guarded by a lot of mutes in deep black, carrying halberds or poles behind the hearse. It looked as if they were guarding us to prevent our escape, as they walked along beside the carriage. After a dreary ride we came to the suburban cemetery and then left the carriages and surveyed the scene. The hearse was the principal object, being drawn by black horses and having tall, black plumes on each side. As we were waiting for it to come up, Mr. B., who was sincerely attached to his wife, but had a sense of humor, could not forbear a sort of apology, saying that he had tried to have it as private and inconspicuous as possible, but it was impossible to get away from the conventionality and pomp of a London funeral: he wished that the hearse could be transported to America and put at the head of the Union army; he was sure the rebels would be routed at once by its appearance! After a short service at the grave, Mr. Baring and I jumped into his cab, throwing off our insignia of mourning, which must have formed a valuable perquisite, — there being silk enough to make a cassock of, — and were soon driving rapidly to London."

Of a less depressing occasion he says: —

“During our stay in London we went to hear Mr. Cobden’s great speech in the Commons. The House of Commons is a very different affair from our House of Representatives; indeed, it looks, at first sight, much more like one of our large committee rooms at the Capitol, or perhaps like the senate chamber there. Only a few strangers are admitted to what is called the speaker’s gallery, and then only by special ticket from the speaker. When Cobden’s speech was expected, considerable influence had to be used to get admittance. We learned that the speaker had in this case, when applied to, expressed fears that the two factions of Union and rebel (unrecognized) emissaries might be placed too near each other, and so we found much diplomacy had been expended in arranging seats to keep ourselves and Messrs. Mason and Slidell separated. The occasion was certainly a very memorable one, for Cobden’s speech rang through Europe and America, and materially influenced the action of the English government. His manner was cold and somewhat hesitating, but he spoke with great force and sense, not mincing his phrases, against the backslidings of his countrymen; and his speech was all the more effective from his taking the stand for us, not (as Bright usually did) from an American point of view, but because he saw England’s honor and interest imperiled by the short-sighted policy of Palmerston and Russell.

“I think it was on the same night that Roebuck made a most malignant attack upon what he called

the barbarism of the Federals in their cruel and atrocious proclamation of emancipation, ‘stimulating the subordinate race to make war against their superiors, and putting a premium on murder, rape, and robbery.’ Monckton Milnes, the poet, whom I have since welcomed here as Lord Houghton, made a very pithy and spirited rejoinder to this diatribe, and quite won my heart.”

Although, as has been shown, my father “kept a stiff upper lip” when confronted with the news of Chancellorsville, both he and his colleague had to be reticent as to what they knew to be the strength and staying powers of the North and West. As to this he writes:—

“We had come, also, prepared to do something in the way of enlightening the British public as to the real strength of the North, and the certainty of our ultimate success, but Mr. Adams thought it doubtful whether such a course would be wise; for if successful in our argument it might show the governing class in Europe that their only chance for breaking up the Union was in active interference; so that he thought it safer for them to be kept neutral by the belief that we were sure to break up.”

They now saw “no sufficient reason for staying longer,” and arranged to return home by the Great Eastern, some time after the 20th of June. There was, however, to be one more dinner party, at Mr. Senior’s, always remembered as an exceptionally agreeable experience. Of this he writes:—

“I was requested to lead in to dinner his daughter-in-law, the wife of Mr. Nassau John Senior, who was very pleasant; but, knowing nothing about her, I refrained from talking upon any interesting subject, until she happened to say that her brother had just returned from France, and that she hoped I would see him. I then had to ask who her brother was, and found it was Tom Hughes. ‘Why,’ said I, ‘he is the one man I wanted to see; I thought he was ill, and that I should go home without seeing him.’ I was going to start in a few days for Liverpool, and she very warmly insisted that I should see her brother, and accordingly asked him for an appointment. When I called at his office in Old Square, Lincoln’s Inn, I found my good friend Tom Hughes, genial and pleasant as he is to-day. I need hardly say that the remainder of my evening with Mrs. Senior at the dinner party was very much more delightful than at the beginning, as it was like finding a warm friend in the midst of an enemy’s camp.”

This led to his writing the following letter, which expressed to Mrs. Senior, what he so often said at home afterward, that no one could tell what her kind words were to him:—

J. M. FORBES TO MRS. N. J. SENIOR.

NEW LODGE, WINDSOR FOREST, 27 *June*, 1863.

MY DEAR MRS. SENIOR,—I cannot thank you too much for your most welcome note, and for its result in a line just received from your brother promising to be in on Monday, and to see me.

Your warm sympathy touches a chord that seldom vibrates. I had thought myself proof against cold or heat, and that I was entirely indifferent to English opinions and feelings, which I found so generally against us. Like the traveler in the fable, I can stand the pelting of the storm, but your sunshine draws off my cloak, and makes me aware that I am open to its cheering influence ; and I tell it you that you may know how much good you can do to others.

I venture to send you three cards, one of myself, one of my daughter Mary, the wife of Lieut.-Colonel Russell, and one of my son, W. H. F. The last was north of Washington, on the Potomac, not far from the crossing place where the raid we hear of to-day occurred. If you read in the papers of some disaster or success to the Second Massachusetts Cavalry, you may look with more interest upon the faces of those who have such a deep concern in its fortunes. My only strong belief is that you may hear of misfortune there, but not of dishonor.

I shall now hear nothing more from them for the next two anxious weeks, and shall then, if all goes well, try to visit the camp.

I shall keep your note to read on the sea, and to show, perhaps, to my young soldier.

Most truly and gratefully yours,

J. M. FORBES.

So the envoys returned to America by the Great Eastern ; but before coming to what my father tells

of his arrival in New York, I must give some more of the letters which had been passing between them and the heads of departments during the weeks which they had spent in Europe : —

J. M. FORBES AND W. H. ASPINWALL TO SECRETARY
WELLES.

LONDON, *April 18, 1863.*

SIR, — . . . By availing of the consuls' service we avoid drawing upon ourselves the observation which would perhaps defeat our object, and we also avail of the arrangements and experiments which both these gentlemen have made. Mr. Dudley, having a vice-consul, will be able to leave his post, in case of need, upon this business ; and we have assured him that you will not only make any explanations regarding such absence which may hereafter be required by the Secretary of State, but will also fully appreciate his zeal. . . .

To offer to buy the ironclads without success, would only be to stimulate the builders to greater activity, and even to building new ones in the expectation of finding a market for them from one party or the other. . . . We call your attention to the inclosed article by Professor Goldwin Smith. . . . We understand that Professor Smith is a high authority, and we presume he is writing entirely of "his own motion," and in the interests of his own country. Could we find a sound legal writer to lay open to the people of England the consequences to their own commerce hereafter, and also, though a

more delicate point, the danger to it now, through a war with us, and to do it entirely from an English point of view, we think the value of the iron-clads, the Southerner, and other dangerous vessels, would decline rapidly. We shall carefully consider this and other points before acting. . . .

Respectfully yours,

W. H. ASPINWALL,
J. M. FORBES.

W. H. ASPINWALL AND J. M. FORBES TO SECRETARY
CHASE.

LONDON, April 18, 1863.

SIR, — We beg leave to inform you that we have obtained a loan of £500,000, for the period of six months, from Messrs. Baring Brothers & Co., on the deposit of \$4,000,000 of the 5-20 bonds handed us, and with the understanding that, in case of the issuing of letters of marque to cruise against British vessels, they shall have a right to claim a prompt reimbursement of their advance, by sale or otherwise, as you may elect. The existing agitation of the public mind, both in and out of Parliament, rendered this condition a *sine quâ non*, and we may safely express our doubt if any other house would have undertaken to make the loan; certainly none on terms so liberal. . . .

We wait impatiently the promised official statement of funded and floating debt, amount of currency notes, etc., and also of revenue from imports and from internal sources; they are much needed

to remove the almost incredible misapprehensions which have been produced by false or undefined newspaper articles. . . .

Your obedient servants,

W. H. ASPINWALL,
J. M. FORBES.

SECRETARY CHASE TO W. H. ASPINWALL AND J. M.
FORBES.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
WASHINGTON, D. C., *March 30, 1863.*

. . . This letter will be delivered to you by Mr. Walker, who will also submit to your perusal the letter of instructions under which he will himself act.

He is not informed as to the particulars of any commission with which you are charged, other than that of negotiating a loan of five millions, but you will doubtless find it convenient and useful to confer with him freely as to all the objects you have in view. . . .

I trust your well-known sagacity and practical experience will contribute much to the success of the efforts of our diplomatic and consular functionaries to arrest these practices so dangerous to peace between the two nations. . . .

The commissioners did not avail themselves of this permission to open their entire budget to Mr. Walker, as the following response shows:—

W. H. ASPINWALL AND J. M. FORBES TO SECRETARY
CHASE.

LONDON, 25 *April*, 1863.

. . We have now to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 30 March, handed to us by the Hon. Robert J. Walker, and to say that this gentleman has also repeated to us the verbal explanations which you made to him before his departure. We have carefully considered both, and we find that the main object of his visit to Europe is to acquaint European capitalists with the actual circumstances and resources of our country.¹ We think it will render great service in helping to stem the current of ignorance and misapprehension so generally prevalent in Europe, and in compliance with your suggestions we shall confer freely with him on all occasions, when we think he can, by his advice or his knowledge of facts, or by his political position, aid us in carrying out the objects of our mission ; but we do not consider ourselves called on, either by your letters or by our own judgment of what is expedient, to show him our instructions, although he has exhibited to us his own ; nor do we feel justified, under our understanding with Messrs. Baring Bros. & Co., to mention to him, or any one else here, the particulars of our temporary loan.

. . . We have not been negligent on the last suggestion of your letter, and are prepared to resort to it whenever other means fail ; but the institution

¹ Mr. Walker had been Secretary of the Treasury under President Polk, 1845 to 1849. — ED.

of criminal prosecution against Laird and other builders by us, or any American or official party, would be liable to raise up such an excitement as would frustrate the object in view. The English government must be moved to take these proceedings, or, failing to do this effectually, we can count on a local English association for action; and either of these must command a support we could not rely on, and both must be exhausted before we take the last chance. . . .

W. H. ASPINWALL AND J. M. FORBES TO HON. GIDEON WELLES.

LONDON, *April 25*, 1863.

. . . We find Mr. Adams extremely desirous of avoiding any pretense for a clamor being raised by the opposition, which would hurt his efforts to stop the Alexandra, and still more the ironclads. Without embarrassing Mr. Adams by consulting him directly, we shall take care to do nothing, in a small way, that would interfere with the larger interests at stake.

We inclose you a telegram cut from the London papers, giving the "Evening Post's" version of Mr. Seward's threatenings and of your plans. It is quite clear from this, that some great indiscretion has occurred at home, which, of course, makes our action infinitely more difficult than it would be under ordinary circumstances.

The consuls are clearly of opinion that, since the Confederate loan was so far successful as to give the

shipbuilders at least a part of their money, it would be impossible to approach the builders of the iron-clads with an offer with any chance of its acceptance at present. We are of the same opinion, and must therefore limit ourselves to watching the effect of the proceedings against the *Alexandra* and of the debates in Parliament, and to preparing (when the right time comes to make an offer) to have some negotiator step in, who will not be identified with America. . . .

Private and Confidential. After his speech last night, Mr. Cobden said to me in his quiet way : "You can't conceive how Admiral Wilkes's appointment is hurting us, your best friends, on this side, and making capital for our joint enemies ! What a pity he cannot be nominated to some honorable post where he would not cause irritation by all that he does ! I would not like him disgraced, but would like to see him promoted to some safe place." Now, I know that Mr. Forster and others of our best friends have the same views, and it is worth considering whether you cannot help them and us !

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

PARIS, May 29, 1865.

. . . We have been made aware, by the debates in Parliament and otherwise, that there is no public prosecutor in England, even for the most dangerous crimes against society, and consequently no officer whose business it is, upon reasonable suspicion, to protect us against the infraction of their foreign enlistment act. . . .

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

LONDON, *June 27, 1863.*

. . . You will have seen in the papers a report of the Alexandra trial, but as a matter of record we have advised the consul, Mr. Dudley, to have it reprinted in pamphlet form, and sent to every member of the House of Commons, and to other influential parties. The ruling of the judge caused universal surprise, and we consider the chance good for a reversal of the decision next fall, when the full court meet; until which time we understand the government intend to hold the Alexandra. We are also advised that the consul can make out so strong a case against the Liverpool ironclads that he counts with great confidence upon getting them stopped until the full court meet; we shall hope to bring you more exact information as to the time of this meeting.¹

¹ This case, *The Attorney-General v. Sillem and others*, is found fully reported in parliamentary documents of 1863 and 1864; and also, on appeal, in 2 Hurlstone & Coltman's Reports, 431, and 10 House of Lords Cases, 704. It was an information for an alleged violation of the Foreign Enlistment Act, and was tried 22-25 June, 1863. Chief Baron Pollock charged the jury that it was lawful to send armed vessels to foreign ports for sale, and that the question was whether the Alexandra was merely in the course of building to carry out such a contract. The act did not forbid building ships for a belligerent power, or selling it munitions of war. And so a belligerent could employ a person here to build for them a ship, easily convertible into a man-of-war. He defined the word "equip" as meaning "furnishing with arms," and left to the jury the question, Was there an intention to equip or fit out a vessel at Liverpool with the intention that she should take part in any contest: that was unlawful. Or was the object really to build a ship on an order, leaving it

We shall also have a full consultation with our minister and Mr. Evarts as to the best time to strike at the ironclads, and we hope to report to you in person very soon after you receive this letter, as it is our purpose to leave in the Great Eastern on Tuesday, the 30th, and we ought to reach New York on Friday or Saturday, 10th or 11th of July. Meantime we beg to say that the law officers of the Crown seem entirely taken by surprise at the decision of the Chief Baron, and that it is received by the bar and the public as an evidence that, if such be the proper construction of the law, it will be absolutely necessary to the peace of nations to have a better law made. . . . We still do not think, in the fluctuating state of public opinion (upon which, to a certain extent, hangs the action of the British government), that it is safe to trust to the British law alone for security from the ironclads. If things look worse, in regard to the law, when we strike at the ironclads, we think the Navy Department ought to be prepared to put a sufficient force near each to stop her before she can get her armament or her full complement of men. This would be a very irritating and dangerous experiment upon our friendly

to the buyers to use it as they saw fit : that would not be unlawful. The jury found for the defendants. On a rule for a new trial, the court was equally divided ; whereupon the junior judge withdrew his own judgment in favor of a new trial, and it was refused. Thereupon the Crown appealed, but the appeal was dismissed on technical grounds for lack of jurisdiction, first by the Court of Exchequer Chamber, and finally, on April 6, 1864, by the House of Lords. The *Alexandra* was not one of the rams, but only a gunboat. She seems to have been used for a test case. — ED.

relations with England, but it may become necessary. We understand from the minister that, except for repairs in case of accident, or for shelter in stress of weather, our national ships are not admitted to the hospitalities of British ports; but our continental friends are not so uncharitable, and we can have vessels at various ports in the reach of telegraph. . . .

The two commissioners arrived in New York in July. Here is the account, given by my father in his notes, of the remarkable situation that awaited them on landing:—

“We landed in New York on Sunday evening [July 12], the day before the great draft riots there broke out. When the pilot came on board, the news of our military success at Gettysburg was coming in, though we could not know at what cost of life among our friends. There was just time for Aspinwall to reach a train that would take him to his home on the North River, and so he left me with our servant John to take care of the rather numerous trunks.

“It was after sundown that the little steamer landed John and myself on the wharf, far down the East River, among as bad-looking a lot of roughs as I ever saw assembled. We did not know that the great riot was about breaking out, nor luckily did the gentry around us know what a prize lay within their grasp; but it was easy to see that the dangerous classes were out: the police were hardly

to be seen, outside of the custom-house officers, and these, knowing something of us, readily passed our baggage without examination; and I found myself on the wharf in the increasing darkness with my pile of trunks, which included three containing six millions of 5-20 bonds (worth to-day [1884] about eight millions in gold). With some difficulty I fought off, without an absolute quarrel, the horde of persistent hackmen who claimed me as their legitimate prey; and I was standing at bay, wondering what to do next, when I was saluted by the mellifluous Hibernian accent of a rough-looking customer. 'Here, Mr. Forbes, take my carriage!' I looked at him without much to increase my confidence in his wretched trap, but asked how he knew me. 'And was I not in the regiment at Port Royal when you was there?' 'Take these three trunks, my good fellow,' said I, pointing to the treasure-bearers; 'and, John, you must get a cart and bring the rest to the Brevoort.' We rattled safely over the rough, dark streets, and I was soon glad to deposit my charge among the heaps in the old Brevoort House entry, and then to find my wife and Alice awaiting me.

"I found also that Governor Andrew was in town, and the intercourse with the North was already cut off by the mob. We heard that night the most exciting stories, from callers, of what was going on, and especially from Collector Barney of the New York Custom-house, whose house was threatened. The draft was made a pretext for the

mobbing of negroes, as it was reported that the object of the draft was to free their race; and so the Irish were called upon to kill all Africans. It was said that about fifteen hundred persons were killed during the skirmishes of those two days.

“For safety we dispatched Alice early Monday morning to Staten Island to our cousin, Frank Shaw,¹ where, as he was a well-known abolitionist, she found herself out of the frying-pan into the fire; but good George Ward took her and all the Shaws into his house, and no harm came to them.

“Captain Anthony and his family were at the Fifth Avenue Hotel on their way to Europe, and he saw a great deal more of actual violence than we did. The house was threatened, and many of the guests and servants deserted it, but the captain stuck to his guns and helped to allay the panic.

“We discussed with Governor Andrew the expediency of bringing Colonel N. P. Hallowell’s 55th Regiment of Colored Troops, just leaving Boston on its way South, into New York, but decided that the experiment was too dangerous a one. The different method pursued in managing the riot at this time in Boston would be a good lesson for the future. Governor Andrew put into all the armories, and places like the Spencer Rifle Company’s factory, where arms were made, a sufficient force to protect them, and only one was attacked by the mob. This was at the North End, and was garrisoned by a company of artillerymen under Colonel Stephen

¹ Francis George Shaw, the father of Col. Robert G. Shaw. — ED.

Cabot, brought up from the fort. He loaded his guns, and made arrangements by cutting slits in the windows to defend them, and then tried to persuade the mob to disperse. Brickbats drove him back into the armory, and they then began to batter down the doors. He waited till there was some danger of their giving way, and then fired through the doors with his cannon into the mob, as well as through the windows with musketry. It is said there were thirty men killed. However that may be, his prompt action put an end to all further disturbances, and this was the only real outbreak in Massachusetts. These riots were no doubt instigated by Southern conspirators for the purpose of rousing up the Irish element in opposition to the draft which was going on; and their attacks upon negroes were wholly in consequence of their well-known jealousy against negro labor. With the great foreign population of Boston once roused, the consequences might have been quite as bad as they were in New York."

My father went on to Washington, where he had reports to make upon his European trip.

Soon after his return home, he received from Mrs. Kemble, who was then in Paris, the proof-sheets of her "Diary of Life on a Southern Plantation," which on her behalf he had put into the Harpers' hands here for publication. They were accompanied by a letter, from which the following is an extract:—

"How I wonder how it fared with those you love in all these late disasters, — with Willy, and Frank

Shaw's son, and young Russell, and all the precious, precious lives offered up for sacrifice to redeem your land. Oh, what a country it ought to be hereafter, ransomed at such a cost! I leave my own folks and friends in London immersed in their own amusements and pursuits; and as by far the most serious half of my thoughts and feelings are just now dwelling all but incessantly on your side of the Atlantic, I am not very sorry to go away from England, where I heard constantly opinions and sentiments expressed about your country and its trials that were very painful to me. Our government and our people are, I believe, sound; that is, the latter feel and think rightly about your war, and the former will act rightly. But our upper classes have shown that like will to like, and sympathize (as was perhaps to be foreseen) with the aristocratic element in your constitution. I knew very well that in the abstract they were sure to do so, but the experience of it has been bitterly painful to me."

The news of Gettysburg and Vicksburg, which had not reached Mrs. Kemble when she wrote, must evidently be that to which John Bright refers in the following letter:—

JOHN BRIGHT TO J. M. FORBES.

ROCHDALE, *July 31, 1863.*

MY DEAR MR. FORBES,—I am glad to hear of your safe arrival, and I rejoice that on your arrival so much good news should await you. I have a note from Mr. Aspinwall this morning of a very

satisfactory character ; and I only now begin to fear that your cause may go on too fast, for I am not sure that the North is yet resolute and unanimous enough to be able to deal wisely with the great slavery question. To me it seems needful to declare the Proclamation an unalterable decree, and to restore no State to its ancient position in the nation until its constitution and laws are made to harmonize with the spirit of it. Till this is done, you will be legally entitled to hold and govern every slaveholding State by that military power which has restored it to the control of the central government.

The "recognition" motion in our House of Commons was a ludicrous failure, as you will have seen. I had the opportunity of preaching some sound doctrine to some unwilling ears. Now the press and the friends of "Secesh" are in great confusion, and their sayings and doings are matter of amusement to me and to many others.

. . . And now for your kind words to me, and your hope that I may come to the States. Many thanks for them and for your invitation. I fear I am getting too far on in life to cross the ocean, unless I saw some prospect of being useful, and had some duty clearly before me. It is a subject of constant regret that I have not paid a visit to the States years ago. Mr. Walker and many others alarm me by telling me I should have a reception that would astonish me.

What they promise me would be a great affliction, for I am not ambitious of demonstrations on my

behalf. We will hope affairs in the States will be more settled, and passions in some degree calmed down, before I come, if I ever come; and then I might spend three months pleasantly, and perhaps usefully, in seeing your country and its people.

I have had great pleasure in making your acquaintance in London, and only regret that, having no house in town, I was not able to offer you the hospitality I wished to have offered to you and to others of your countrymen.

With all good wishes for you and for your country and government,

I am with much respect, yours sincerely,

JOHN BRIGHT.

The following letter from Mr. Bates points clearly enough to Mr. Roebuck's having been forewarned, or having had a wonderful prescience, of mob rule in New York:—

JOSHUA BATES TO J. M. FORBES.

21 ARLINGTON STREET, 22 August, 1863.

Many thanks for your letter of the 4th August. I grieve with you for the loss of good young men in battle; and when taken from the families of intimate friends or relatives, and such noble fellows as young Shaw, it touches every heart.

Cabot did his duty well, and less blood will have been shed by his mode of dealing with the mob than by using blank cartridges first; these may be fired after the mob begins to run, not before. Governor

Seymour is a rebel, or as bad as a rebel, for he called the mob "my friends." I hope something may come out that will enable you to fix his treason upon him. This outbreak at New York was expected by Roebuck here; the defeat of Meade, the rising in New York, and the upset of the Washington government, were mentioned by him to a friend as certain.

The two main objects of the mission to England, the detention of the ironclads, and the placing of 5-20 bonds there and on the continent, continued to occupy my father's thoughts after his return. I find him writing to Mr. Thomas Baring in London:—

J. M. FORBES TO THOMAS BARING.

YACHT AZALEA, OFF NAUSHON, *September 11, 1863.*

I have yours of the 19th of August. The issue of 5-20's is not officially announced. . . .

The editorial of the "Times" on ironclads works well; when you see that question settled, I think you can make money by buying the bonds left with you.

I have no fear of any early collision with your country, if the North succeeds, without compromise, in whipping the scoundrels. If we could ever be so weak as to give in to them and degrade our present government in the eyes of the people,—the slaveholders, coming back with their power for mischief remaining, might join the tail of the sham democracy who have always been willing to coalesce with

the sham aristocracy, and this combination might use the joint armies and the Irish to pitch into you. If we put the slaveholders under, as we mean to do, with their beautiful institution destroyed, there will be no danger of war with England until some new irritation comes up; we shall be sick of war. . . .

I wish you would pull up in time! Then we could join you in putting Napoleon out of Mexico, and in stopping French colonization in that direction. We ought to be allies! and Mexico gives us another chance to become so.

With best regard to Mr. Bates, and others round you.

N. B. My young soldier continues well, thank you. I have just sent him his eighth horse, so you may judge he has not been idle!

The news contained in the laconic and characteristic postscript of the following letter must surely have brought great relief to its recipient: —

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS TO J. M. FORBES.

LONDON, 7 *September*, 1863.

I have been taking a little vacation in Scotland, which must account to you for my failure earlier to notice yours of the 4th ulto.

We are now all in a fever about Mr. Laird's iron-clads, one of which is on the point of departure, and the other launched and getting ready, with double gangs of workmen at it night and day. The question now is, will government interfere; and it must

be settled in a day or two at furthest. I have done all in my power to inspire them with a just sense of the responsibility they may incur from permitting so gross a breach of neutrality. If, however, they fail to act, you may perhaps soon see one of the vessels, with your glass from Milton Hill, steaming up to Boston, as the Richmond paper threatened. She will stand a cannonade, unless the harbor be obstructed. It will be for Governor Andrew to be on the watch the moment the news of her departure reaches America. She will be delayed a little by the necessity of taking her armament at some other point.

Of course, if all this takes place, I shall be prepared to make my bow to our friends in London, as soon as the papers can be made out. . . .

P. S. 9 September. Since writing this the government has decided to stop the vessels.

Yours truly,

C. F. A.¹

The day before this letter from Mr. Adams left

¹ On the 5th of September Mr. Adams wrote to Lord Russell: "At this moment, when one of the ironclad vessels is on the point of departure from this kingdom on its hostile errand against the United States, it would be superfluous for me to point out to your lordship that THIS IS WAR."

The answer (Sept. 8) was: "Instructions have been issued which will prevent the departure of these two ironclad vessels from Liverpool."

Still the decision of the British government was but a postponement, for Mr. Adams wrote (Sept. 17): "The departure of the rams seems to be uncertain." This was confirmed by what he heard from Lord Russell (Sept. 25), that "the departure of the rams is under consideration." Draper's *American Civil War*, vol. iii. pp. 171, 172.

London, my father, having heard that Mr. Sumner was to address a meeting of the "Young Men's Republican Union," at the Cooper Institute, on "the relations of France and England to this country," wrote to him thus : —

J. M. FORBES TO CHARLES SUMNER.

NAUSEON, *September 8, 1863.*

I hear you are to speak on foreign relations, — a delicate subject for a man in your position.

May I give you a hint? I hear from good authority that great doubt exists whether the English government will consider our *prima facie* case made out against the ironclads, and if not they will make no attempt to stop them.

It will not do, therefore, to say that the letting out of these vessels means war between us and England, for your saying so may make your prophecy into its fulfillment!

Of course, we must tell the English people how much the going out of these vessels will increase the danger of war, and try to wake them up to this danger, but we cannot afford to go to war yet, even for this. We are in a sad state of want of preparation for a war with a naval people. We must gain time, must wait, and even when ready must still hope to avoid the fatal necessity.

It is a great point that the "Times" backs up the Emancipation Society's petition; it shows which way Palmerston wishes the public mind turned; but it is not conclusive, and the whole subject needs the

greatest caution, as far from threats as from any indication that we will submit.

Forgive me for ever seeming to preach to an adept like yourself; but I have been there and know the sensitiveness of the British people (even decent ones) to threats, and also the readiness of the government to avail of any appearance of weakness on our part to push us. . . .

I delight in the President's plain letter to plain people!¹

The caution appears to have been thrown away. Mr. Sumner made a very belligerent speech. It drew from Mr. Rathbone, as representing our friends in England, a protest, to which the following is the response:—

J. M. FORBES TO WILLIAM RATHBONE, JR.,
LIVERPOOL.

BOSTON, 31 *October*, 1863.

Your note about Sumner's speech was duly received and has been used so that it will do good. Being marked private, I could not show it to Sumner, but I read it to him without giving your name. I have also sent a copy of its substance to one of our campaign orators who was disposed to pitch into your government and people too!

Sumner was much disturbed at it, and at other similar letters; but insists that he was right in telling the truth, and that he thus best served the

¹ See page 73.

interests of Peace. He does not shine in the perceptive faculties; has eloquence, scholarship, high principle, and many other good qualities, but he has not the faculty of putting himself in the position of an opposing party, and conceiving of how things look from a different standpoint than his own.

Nobody can appreciate the extreme sensitiveness of the English mind to anything which can, however remotely, be construed into a threat, unless he has been in the little island within the past year. When to this honest sensitiveness you add the many causes for taking offense in the selfishness of certain parties and the prejudice of others who wish to see our experiment fail, there is an array of dangers against speaking out which will deter most men from doing so. Sumner claims to be, *par excellence*, the friend of Peace and of England, and therefore thinks he can best sound the alarm when he sees war threatening.

He says that all the arguments you and I use against plain speaking were used with even more force against speaking the truth against slavery. It would irritate the South, would hurt our friends, would strengthen the hands of our enemies, etc., etc., and if he had listened then we should now be the supporters of a mighty slave empire. There is something in this, but analogies are not conclusive, and I shall continue to do my best to keep people's tongues quiet! The more I think and know of the whole subject, however, the more sure I am that the only safeguard against a war, if not now, certainly the

first time you get into war when we are at peace, is your prescription, — a radical change of your and our law. I am sure, although I cannot prove it, that if Mr. Adams's whole correspondence were published you would see that we accepted the proposal to modify our laws (and yours) although we had found ours sufficient to protect you up to this time.

But the experience of the doings of the Alabama, etc., has shown that steam changes the practical effect of the law, and that the right to sell ships of war, even if sent out honestly for sale, is incompatible with friendly neutral relations. Moreover, the irritation caused by your privateers will surely change the practical mode of executing our law.

You will then go to war with us for doing precisely what your government have done, — unless you abstain from the same motives we do, *expediency*. No maritime nation will hereafter see its commerce destroyed and its people irritated by steamers doing such widespread mischief as any steamer can, without going to war about it. Hence the need of new treaties modifying the present construction of the law of nations permitting outfit of vessels adapted to war purposes, whether *bona fide* for sale or the property of belligerents.

You and I know very well how easy it is to pass over a bill of sale the moment a vessel is three miles from the shore; and that when the law is once fully established that warships may legally be exported for sale, the rebels or any other belligerents

can get them delivered at convenient points without the builders or anybody else breaking the letter of the law.

As you told me the day I landed in Liverpool, your law is, under your practice, radically defective. Ours did well under our practice, but you can never for a moment count upon our continuing the same practice in the face of your precedents. You hit the nail on the head when you told me that your law was worthless for our protection. Accept my assurance that ours will be worthless for your protection in your next war. Our mutual safety is to change it, and that promptly, while you are strong and can do it with a good grace, and while we are still in danger from its defects. It is absurd to say that your navy would have been much more efficient than ours in catching the Alabama, etc. All naval ships are loaded down with guns and stores and trash. Our mercantile warships are better for speed than either your or our warships.

I was only yesterday talking with one of our old clipper captains whom I got appointed two years ago volunteer lieutenant, and who has a merchant steamer bought and armed by government. He has been very successful in catching blockade runners and assures me that the Clyde and other trials of speed are perfectly illusory. He has taken several vessels that were *going sixteen knots*, his ship beating them at *ten knots*.

It is not the Alabama's or Honda's speed; but the ocean is a big place, and we shall always have

numerous light-built, fast steamers that can repeat the Alabama feats even with the whole British navy divided between blockading ports and chasing privateers!

Depend upon it, we can export for sale to any belligerent as many Alabamas as he can pay for. It is for merchants and statesmen to look ahead and avert the mutual danger.

With best regards to your father and all your circle.

A few days previous to this, on the 23d of October, my father had also had to meet some criticisms and doubts of his correspondent, Mr. Bates. He evidently felt that it was a time which called for optimism, and so, after setting forth the value of 5-20's at par, he wound up thus:—

“Rosecrans's removal is all right. Poor fellow, his health broke down, and he came near swamp-ing us at Chattanooga. The military situation is all right. People must go on changing their investments into 5-20's until these go above par; so the financial situation is all right. The future is bright;” and then, after giving encouraging particulars about the fresh call for volunteers and the enlistment of men lately slaves, winds up this part of his letter: “A John Brown abolitionist is the United States recruiting officer for Tennessee! so you see the world does move.”¹

In bringing to a close my account of the prin-

¹ Major George L. Stearns, of Massachusetts. — ED.

cipal subject of this chapter, the London mission, I must not omit to speak of the final communications between the Secretary of the Navy and the commissioners. On board the *Great Eastern*, on the way home, on July 10, 1863, they wrote to the Secretary recapitulating what they had done, and urging that, with the evidence already collected, Mr. Dudley and Mr. Evarts should take immediate legal steps for the detention of the ironclads. They wrote : —

“ While failing to accomplish any great object, we hope that we have done something to enlighten public opinion by our constant intercourse with leading public and literary men and others, and also by aiding and encouraging our consuls in their efforts to stop the outfit of pirates in what ought to be the friendly ports of Great Britain.”

To this letter there was apparently no immediate reply. My father says in his notes : “ Of course Aspinwall and I refused to take any pay beyond our actual expenses, and these, with some advances to the consuls, were largely met by the return to the United States government of half the London banker’s commission we bargained for ; so if we did little good we certainly did no harm, and were not a source of much expense to the government.” After they had got back this half commission from the Barings and included it in their final account to the Navy Department, they received from the Secretary the following letter : —

GIDEON WELLES TO W. H. ASPINWALL AND J. M. FORBES.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *February 9, 1864.*

GENTLEMEN, — Your letter of the 2d of February, inclosing J. M. Forbes's check for \$21,241.34, and W. H. Aspinwall's check for \$559.87, making a total of \$21,801.21, arising mainly from return commissions from amount deposited with Baring Bros. & Co., London, and as final settlement of your account for expenses while abroad in the service of the government, was duly received.

The amount heretofore drawn from

the Treasury on account of the

expenses was \$24,104.46

Less amount returned 21,801.21

Net expenses \$2,303.25

In closing this transaction, I avail myself of the opportunity of tendering to each of you the thanks of the department for the satisfactory execution of the trust committed to you, and the manner in which it has been brought to a termination.

Generously refusing all compensation for your personal services, you in a great emergency promptly, and with much inconvenience to yourselves, entered with alacrity upon the mission confided to you, and the department has reason to be satisfied with the intelligent and judicious manner in which its duties were discharged.

Personally, as well as officially, I desire to express my acknowledgments for the promptness with which, when appealed to, you embarked in this work, and

for the fidelity and ability exhibited, resulting most beneficially for our country in a period of great difficulty and trial.

With my best wishes and sincere regards to each of you,

I am respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy.

Thus ended this episode of my father's life, of which he wrote in 1884: "So far as regarded any definite results, our mission was a failure." But, as will be seen in the next chapter, the end that he aimed at was accomplished a little later, and his own efforts were thought, in England, to have contributed in an important degree towards bringing it about.

CHAPTER XVI

THE COLORED TROOPS

JOY and sorrow followed each other very closely in the war times. My father's delight at the news of Gettysburg and Vicksburg, which met him on his landing in New York in July, 1863, was mingled with grief at the death of his young cousin, Robert Shaw, who had been killed while leading his colored regiment against Fort Wagner.

It had been largely through his influence with Governor Andrew that the doubly dangerous post of colonel of this regiment had been offered to Robert Shaw, whose parents represented strongly the anti-slavery feeling in the North,—doubly dangerous, for the Confederates had threatened that colored soldiers should be enslaved and their white officers treated as criminals. The governor had wished to show that the best people in the Bay State were willing to lead in the movement to arm citizens of African descent. The young colonel was a representative man, already distinguished in his original regiment, and his appointment had been followed by that of other volunteers like him, and the roll of officers was promptly filled. Their gallantry and that of the men they led is matter of history.

The whole episode grieved and impressed my father very much, and made him, after the war, president of the committee and one of the most energetic workers in raising the fund for the monument to the memory of the "fair-haired Northern hero," with his "guard of dusky hue," which now stands on the edge of Boston Common, facing the State House, at the spot where Governor Andrew had bidden them Godspeed on their leaving for the South, not two months before the attack on the fort.

But in those days, when the Union was in a life and death struggle, all private grief was merged in public work, and his correspondence shows that he at once took up his share with renewed energy. In August he is writing, "in the cars," to Mr. S. G. Ward, urging him to stir up the press, which "is not helping as much as it might," with six cogent reasons for "increasing our black army;" to Mr. Chauncey Smith, strongly advising the War Department, of which he was the solicitor, not to allow a drafted man himself to furnish a substitute, but to have him pay \$300, and let the department find a substitute for him; and to the Secretary of War on the organization required for making the system of raising the black troops effective. To this last the following is the reply:—

EDWIN M. STANTON TO J. M. FORBES.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
CITY OF WASHINGTON, *August 11, 1863.*

I have your favor of the 7th instant. It is certainly true that the great instrument required for success in the organization of black troops is some competent, organizing mind, earnestly devoted to the subject, and willing to spend and be spent in the effort to accomplish it. But where is that mind to be found? I have been seeking for a long time, and have as yet been unable to discover it. General Barlow, of Massachusetts, I had intended to assign to that duty, but his wounds in the battle of Gettysburg have rendered him unable to undergo the fatigue incident to such an undertaking. No greater favor can be rendered to the government or to this department than for you, or any one else, to point out to me the man or men fitted for this good task. I am diligently employed with such material as is at my command, and I hope with good result; but the man who is fitted for a leader in the work has not yet manifested himself to me.

In respect to the suggestion of offering bounties to the owners of slaves, it may be satisfactory to you to know that the subject has for some time been under consideration. The advantages are obvious; and I am in hope that the movement will very speedily attain the point where slave-owners in Missouri and Maryland will themselves make the offer, and thus avoid what to some minds appears to be an insurmountable difficulty, although it is not

regarded by me as any obstacle whatever. I shall be glad at any time to receive any instruction or suggestion that may occur to you as beneficial to this branch of the service.

Acting on this letter, my father went to work with Senator Chandler, of Michigan (afterwards Secretary of the Interior under President Grant), to secure "one or two very vigorous Western men," whom they both knew, for this service.

Then there were the affairs of the Union Club of Boston, which had been started just before he left for England, called derisively the "Sambo," but a very effective organization, so long as it was needed; the Loyal Publication Society, now in regular running order, under Mr. C. E. Norton, but always finding work for its founder; the Sanitary Commission, for which all the home part of his family had been hard at work during his absence; and a thousand other matters of public interest to be added to that which, as will have been seen, remained over from the London mission.

The education of the negroes on the Sea Islands was one of the many side interests of this time. In the autumn of 1862 Mr. E. S. Philbrick, a philanthropic man, but also a practical one, who had settled temporarily on one of the islands, had written to my father, urging that the negroes wanted guidance, instruction, and encouragement during their infancy as freemen, and that these could best be given by at first employing them on the land and

then allowing them to buy it in small lots. He and his immediate friends were able to furnish half of the \$30,000 required for buying land at the government's war tax sale in the following April, and other expenses; and would Mr. Forbes help in raising the other half? My father had at once taken up the idea, made a rough draft of an agreement for carrying it out, contributed himself, and asked others to join, and had left the matter well under way before sailing for England. The land had been bought, as proposed, and Mr. Philbrick was now hard at work. I may add here that the project was carried out by this gentleman with such prudence and economy that, after the object in view had been fully attained, the capital, with interest, was returned to the subscribers. The negroes proved to be teachable and anxious to learn how to save. Many of them had already some money, which they had earned in selling eggs, chickens, etc., to the army, so that soon they were able to buy bits of the land, and by degrees got the title to their own little farms. Several Northern ladies, who had gone to the islands early in 1862, stayed there as teachers and friends of the negroes, who, under their influence, became a self-supporting and self-respecting community; so that until the great gale and tidal wave of 1892 overwhelmed the islands, there were only two paupers upon them, and they had come from the mainland.

Looking back to the autumn of 1863, my father writes in his notes: "About this time, having failed

to induce our government to order marine engines built abroad, I had procured subscriptions enough to build the sloop-of-war Meteor, and began to build her engine in England. The object was to have a cruiser that could not only outspeed the Alabama, but also capture her. The Kearsage, under the gallant Winslow, accomplished the object, but her success was due to the fighting qualities of ship and crew and not to her speed." Of the Meteor more will be heard; no patriotic effort ever encountered a more decided douche of cold water.

The notes go on to say:—

"In the fall of 1863, after Gettysburg, Grant's appointment to the chief command changed everything. He had described in brief the preceding history of the army as that of 'a balky team, never pulling long together,' and his aim was to bring the whole body into accord. It was, of course, an entirely different machine from the undisciplined force with which we had begun the war, and his chances were better than those of any previous commander; but he had two great qualities which placed him ahead, not only of his predecessors, but of his contemporaries,—unity and steadiness of purpose, and, best of all, great magnanimity toward those under him. Confident in himself, he seemed to have no jealousies or petty faults, and he sought to get the very best men for his subordinate commanders, and to award them all possible credit instead of grasping it for himself. From his accession to power our progress was steadily onward. Even

Seward's disposition to compromise, and Lincoln's to meddle with military strategy, gave way before Grant's steadiness."

At this period, in a letter to the President forwarded through Senator Sumner, my father communicated his views on some public questions.

J. M. FORBES TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN, PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED STATES.

BOSTON, *September 8, 1863.*

SIR, — Your letter to the Springfield Convention has exhausted (so far as you are concerned) the question of the negro, and will live in history side by side with your proclamation.

It meets the fears of the timid and the doubts of the reformer. It proves that the Proclamation and the policy resulting from it are the most conservative, both of liberty and of our form of government.

Will you permit a suggestion from one who has nothing to ask for himself: one who would accept no office, and who seeks only to do his duty in the most private way possible?

The negro question being settled, and the opinions of the great body of loyal people being now right thereupon, the next great want is to get the public mind of the North, and of such part of the South as you can reach, right upon the true issue of the existing struggle. People at a distance have discerned this better than most of us who are in the midst of it. Our friends abroad see it. John

Bright and his glorious band of English republicans see that we are fighting for democracy : or (to get rid of the technical name) for liberal institutions. The democrats and the liberals of the Old World are as much and as heartily with us as any supporters we have on this side. Our enemies, too, see it in the same light. The aristocrats and the despots of the Old World see that our quarrel is that of the people against an aristocracy.

If our people of the North can be made to see this truth, the rebellion will be crushed for want of Northern support, which it has had from the wolves under the sheep's garments of sham democracy, who have misled large bodies of unthinking and ignorant but generally honest Northern men. After we get military successes, the mass of the Southern people must be made to see this truth, and then reconstruction becomes easy and permanent. How shall we make plain people see this, North and South, in the shortest time, so as to save the most we can in blood and treasure? Bonaparte, when under the republic, fighting despots of Europe, did as much by his bulletins as he did by his bayonets : the two went on together promising democratic institutions to the populations whose leaders he was making war upon. You have the same opportunity, and greater ; for you have enemies North and South, *reading* our language, whom you can teach.

My suggestion, then, is that you should seize an early opportunity and any subsequent chance, to teach your great audience of plain people that the

war is not the North against the South, but the people against the aristocrats. If you can place this in the same strong light which you did the negro question, you will settle it in men's minds, as you have that.

You can, in addition, direct your generals to issue such bulletins or general orders as will at the same time instruct their own men and such of the rebels as can be reached.

A Tennessee paper, never suspected of Northern tendencies, has lately given a classification of the population of that State. It estimates that those who originated secession, and who cordially support it, are one sixteenth of the people. This is a very large estimate.

Olmsted confines the aristocratic class to those who own twenty negroes and upwards. This class in the rebel States numbers about 28,000 persons, which is about the 178th part of 5,000,000.

Let the people North and South see this line clearly defined between the people and the aristocrats, and the war will be over!

Fearing you will not remember me, I ask Mr. Sumner to accredit me to you.

I am, with great respect, yours,

J. M. FORBES.

To this letter the following reply was sent: —

JOHN HAY TO J. M. FORBES.

EXECUTIVE MANSION,
WASHINGTON, *September 12, 1863.*

MY DEAR SIR, — The President directs me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter transmitted by Mr. Sumner, and to express to you his sincere thanks for the suggestions it contains, as well as for the kind terms in which you have spoken of himself. I have the honor to be very truly,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN HAY,
Private Secretary.

In his notes, my father speaks of his visits, at this time, to the camp of Colonel Lowell, now in command of the Second Massachusetts Cavalry near Vienna, about fifteen miles from Washington, with my brother serving under him as major. There were races and quail shooting to pass the time, and horse stories told by the officers of the California company of the regiment already referred to, which appear to have been "too big to bear recording;" and evidently their guest enjoyed himself among his "boys," as only such a man, who had brought them all together in such a cause, was likely to do.

In October, Mr. William Evans, one of the small circle of radicals in England from whom he had received comfort and encouragement there, had come to America and was about to pay a visit to the President. My father appears to have missed seeing him, for he writes to him in New York: —

J. M. FORBES TO WILLIAM EVANS.

BOSTON, *October 21, 1863.*

I wanted to have a long sit-down with you before you see the President. . . .

I want you to see the President to try to present two ideas :—

1st and foremost, that his proclamation enforced gives him the access to the English masses and through them to the government of Great Britain.

2d. That anxiety still exists there as to the effect of the slave States offering to come back if they can thus save slavery.

On this head I told him I had assured my British friends that there were no slaves in those States ; all had been freed by the President, who would as soon think of importing three millions from Africa as reënslaving them !

3d. I wish you could make him see and feel that you and Bright and others represent the democratic element in Great Britain, and that you look upon him as fighting the battle of democracy for all the world !

I wish our people understood this as well as yours do !

Yours in great haste,

J. M. FORBES.

Mr. Evans appears to have driven the ideas home, for on his return from Washington he writes to my father thus :—

WILLIAM EVANS TO J. M. FORBES.

11 PINE STREET, NEW YORK, 3 November, 1863.

Your suggestions were duly attended to in my recent visit to Washington, and I took advantage of the hospitality afforded me to explain my views, which were in accordance with your own.

So far from the Proclamation being a cause of embarrassment to the government, it has been and is, with regard to the feeling of Europe, the great source of their strength: and I did not hesitate to tell the President that had it not been for the anti-slavery policy of his government there would have been much greater difficulty in preventing a recognition of the Southern States.

If the non-recognition be attributable to any one cause more than another, it is to the very proclamation which he seems to regard as a matter of difficulty.

Entre nous, I was sorry to hear such views expressed, and did my part to show both to him and to Mr. Seward the importance of taking a bold course in this matter. . . .

It must have been about this time that my father wrote a paper, "crude" as he calls it, but certainly forcible, on the question of parolling and exchanging prisoners, — one of vital interest then, but only interesting now as showing that, with a son in the army liable to be affected by it at any moment, he treated it solely with a view to the most effective prosecution of the war. He opposed any plan of

exchange at that time, on the ground of the relative advantage of an exchange to an enemy weaker in numbers than ourselves, and of the inferior condition of the men returned by the rebels as compared with those returned by us, and the consequent prolonging of the war; and especially on account of the refusal of the rebels to exchange colored troops and their officers.

On the last day of the year he writes a letter to Mr. R. Parrott, the gunmaker of West Point Foundry, New York, explaining why he had bought while in England some "Blakely" guns for Massachusetts, and going at length into the comparative merits of these and the "Rodman" and "Dahlgren" and "Parrott" (his own) guns; a letter full of public interest then, and showing at once a thorough grasp of the whole subject and a thirst for all available information on it, but obsolete now, in view of the enormous strides in the art of knocking holes in iron plates made between 1863 and 1899.

My father writes as to the first half of the year 1864, "I find nothing among my papers or recollections worthy of record." Here I ought to say that the most important of these "papers," his press-copying book for political letters, cannot now be found; it was probably destroyed or mislaid in 1890, when a fire at his office in Boston made it necessary to move two wagon loads of written matter. It is evident, however, from a few drafts of his letters which remain, and from numberless replies, that he did not stay his hand during that period; also that

it must have been a most trying time for all those who were determined that the war should have such an ending as to make the survival of slavery on any conditions impossible. Everything seemed to drag heavily; nothing decisive to the public mind was being accomplished by army or navy. The escape from Liverpool and the appearance here of the Laird rams seemed, up to May, still possible; many people were tired of war and its sacrifices and longing for peace; and the weak-kneed, always a large class, were clamoring for peace at any price.

On the other hand, the sturdier natures at home and abroad were holding on doggedly. Consul Dudley writes from Liverpool in February, 1864, after thanking his correspondent for sending him Hawthorne's "Our Old Home:" —

"I am a radical and becoming more so every day, beginning to hate everybody who does not love my country. . . . We have got all the vessels stopped and are now getting up the evidence to convict them. The two ironclads built by Laird in the Mersey are to be tried in May. . . . Evarts is over here and doing us good service. The feeling of the government towards us is better than it was; indeed, we stand better to-day than we have at any time during the war."

At this time Mr. William Evans writes from England, reviewing his American experiences, and says: —

"When I think of your great country, and the efforts it is making to throw off that world-wide

blot on its escutcheon, I declare to you I feel proud even to know the men who are great enough to take prominent part in its movements. No one can appreciate the grandeur of the sacrifices you are making without visiting your shores. To doubt your success is but to question the law of gravitation. But what wonderful resources you display!

“We have had our friend Bright up for a week or two; our whole talk is about you, your friends, America, and its great career. Every mail, every line that comes from you, we look for with thrilling interest; not that we attach undue importance to success, for reverse means more satisfactory ending, and temporary defeat is but a more abiding assurance of a glorious consummation.”

I find no other letter from this enthusiastic friend, nor do I know whether he ever again visited America.

About this time very troublesome questions had arisen, relating to the pay of the colored troops. The injustice of offering two prices to soldiers, the larger to white and the smaller to black, called forth the following letter¹ to Mr. Fessenden:—

J. M. FORBES TO W. P. FESSENDEN.

BOSTON, *February 5, 1864.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I observe that you oppose retrospective action in regard to pay of black troops, but do not yet gather your reasons for it. However

¹ Kindly sent me by his son, General Fessenden. — ED.

sound these may be on the general question, I hope, since you have carried your point there, that you will also take the lead in securing an amendment which is necessary to carry out the promises of the government in a particular case.

The more ignorant and unprotected the sufferers, the more just and expedient to assure them of the good faith of the government. I refer to the case of the 54th and 55th regiments of Massachusetts, the first raised from colored troops by any State, and, it may be, the only ones to whom specific promises were made, by authority of the Secretary of War, that they should be put upon the same footing as to pay and allowances with other Massachusetts volunteers.

I hand you a copy of Governor Andrew's message on the subject; of course you need no confirmation of the governor's statements, but it may have some bearing, as fixing the date of the understanding with the Secretary of War, to say that our committee for recruiting these regiments applied to the governor before the first man was enlisted or the first representation made, and received his assurance then, as coming from the government at Washington, that their pay allowance should be the same with our other troops.

The conduct of the men has been beyond all praise, brave, obedient, and soldier-like. They refused to receive the part pay, which under the construction of the law by the department was offered them, of \$10 per month; so that they have received

no pay from the United States for about a year's service. They also refused upon the point of honor to receive from the State of Massachusetts the pay and allowance which they considered due them from their general government.

I hope you will see them paid retrospectively, whatever you do with others who had no such promises made them. Governor Andrew is ill, or I am sure he would state the case more forcibly than I can do.

N. B. I hand three articles on good strong taxation, cut from the "Daily Advertiser" some time ago; they are by our friend William Gray.

I wish Congress was as well up to a good strong tax bill as the people and even the men of property are. There never was such a time as to-day to pass a tax bill adequate to the support of the credit of government.

Mr. Sedgwick writes also to my father and adds his word on the subject:—

"The course of Congress on the negro pay bill is wholly inexplicable. There is not a decently fair man in Congress who does not admit that they should be paid the same as white soldiers. It is just, honest, and politic; it is absolutely essential to the further vigorous prosecution of the war; and yet collectively—in their corporate capacity—Congress acts like the devil about this. But the time is coming! I don't know but all this neglect and delay and quarreling is wholesome. In the end I

am sure it will bring about this great result, negro equality; equal right in Sambo to fight with Jonathan, vote with him, go to school with him, preach to him, and go to Congress if he can get votes enough.

“I go now for the largest liberty.

“I have your letter to Father Abraham. Governor Andrew’s letter, resolutions, letter to Twitchell, etc., all sound and good. Keep hammering; it is the only way; in the end it will be effectual!”

At this time even Charles Sumner’s undaunted courage recognized that some military success was needed to buoy up friends and depress enemies. He wrote from the senate chamber March 12, 1864:

“If we could only conquer these rebels at home we should not have much to fear abroad, but let the spring campaign go wrong and we shall be threatened again.”

Then there are almost daily letters from Mr. C. B. Sedgwick showing that the passing of a recruiting bill, which had been set going by my father, was being pressed by him in a much crowded session of Congress and in the teeth of government opposition.

Mr. E. B. Ward writes from Detroit (then looked on as well out in the West) that he had “taken the most pungent portions,” of some matter which my father had sent him, and given them to “a person going to Washington,” so that the Solons of the capital might receive straight from the fresh West new arguments in favor of the “African Bureau Bill” and the “African Equalization Bill.”

It seems, also, that he continued to be at work on behalf of the freedmen; for James Russell Lowell writes to him at this time introducing a "young friend from Philadelphia deeply interested in" those fellow-citizens, and adding, "You can tell him better than any one what he wants to know, and he would be an excellent person as teacher, or in any position which demanded character and capacity."

But what must have most troubled a forecasting mind during those months was the coming presidential election. He, in common with the more ardent spirits of his party, had begun to question whether, if the apparent administrative inertia should continue, Mr. Lincoln could be reëlected, and whether, therefore, there could not be found for Republican nominee a man of more decision and speedy action.

The following letter from the United States minister in London was calculated to increase my father's perplexity on this subject: —

C. F. ADAMS TO J. M. FORBES.

LONDON, 31 *March*, 1864.

Yours of the 29th of February has been too long on my table unanswered. . . .

Matters are in a very shaky state here. The ministry stagger along without adequate support in either house. The opposition have made up their difference and are getting hungry for power. The Parliament is dragging to its end. Everybody ex-

pects a dissolution, and the members who are likely to meet opponents are becoming very chary about committing themselves on doubtful issues. Nothing more will be done about us until this state of things passes away. Meanwhile we ought to be making progress to a settlement. We all want peace and restoration very badly. The Southern people are thoroughly used up. The governor of North Carolina openly speaks to his people "as a dying man to dying men." The governor of Georgia tells his that the only demand to be constantly reiterated is for "peace, peace, peace." Such talk is not the talk of a year ago, or even of six months since. It is not the "last ditch" stuff.

On our side the prospect has its shadows too. Our debt is going on at a rate which will before long test the philosophy of the most cheerful taxpayer. Mr. Chase is doing wonders, too, running us into the mud. I hope he is prepared presently to try his skill in pulling us out. If he should retire, I pity the man who will succeed him. Our people as yet are not quite alive to their position. But if a prospect for restoration and reconciliation on fair and honorable terms should chance to open, I hope they will not be so rash as to throw it away. Somehow or other the summer ought not to pass without a substantial termination of the war. I say this to you in confidence, both as it respects our domestic and our foreign relations. I wish I were at home that I could enforce it. . . .

I know exactly the feelings this letter must have

excited ; resulting in a sterner resistance to compromise, and a more determined energy in helping to carry the slave power to a death from which there could be no resurrection.

In the midst of these anxieties, there came as a pleasant little break a dinner given by the Saturday Club, on the occasion of the three hundredth anniversary of Shakspeare's birth. In view of this occasion Mr. Emerson writes to my father : —

RALPH WALDO EMERSON TO J. M. FORBES.

CONCORD, 18 *April* [1864], *Monday*.

MY DEAR MR. FORBES, — I am in pain to hear from you on the matter of our Shakspeare festival of the "Saturday Club" on the 23d instant. We cannot do without your presence and aid on that day. I fear that in your journeyings and patriotic and private toils my note has never reached you. One part on which we had relied on you was, for the urging Whittier to come. I sent him the formal invitation of the Club, and told him that he would very likely hear again from you ; as I remembered that you had expressed the confidence that you would one day bring him. Bryant and Richard Grant White are coming, and R. H. Dana, Sr., and Everett, and Governor Andrew ; and Longfellow is coming back, and it is very desirable that this true poet, and hid like a nightingale, should be there. But I have heard that his sister is ill and he not likely to come. He has not sent any reply

as yet, and I fancy that its falling on Saturday, and his terror of being in Boston on the Sunday, may be in the way. But if you, who are a ruler of men, will promise to protect him and say how exceptional the occasion is, I yet hope you will bring him with you.

Ever yours,

R. W. EMERSON.

The hour I named to him was six o'clock. It is now fixed at four o'clock P. M., at the Revere House.

My father, when writing to urge Mr. Whittier to come to the Shakspeare dinner, took the opportunity of asking his opinion as to including loyal men of all parties in the pending call to the Republican convention for nominating a candidate for the presidency. As to this, Mr. Whittier, writing from Amesbury on the "20th of the 4th month," after regretting his not being able to be present at the dinner, says, "I quite agree with thee as to the nominating convention. Let us have all loyal, freedom-loving men there."

A similar suggestion seems to have been made to George William Curtis, expressing doubts about Mr. Lincoln as a candidate for reëlection, and suggesting the postponing of the presidential campaign till that of the army should give some decisive results. To this Mr. Curtis replies from Staten Island, on the 27th of April, saying that "the presidential campaign is opened. . . . You gentlemen who don't like Mr. Lincoln now, won't like him any better if Grant is successful." A rough draft of the first part of my father's reply reads as follows:—

J. M. FORBES TO GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS.

Boston, *April 28, 1864.*

MY DEAR MR. CURTIS, — I have yours of 27th. You say “you gentlemen who don’t like Mr. Lincoln,” in reference to me. Now I have too deep an interest in this war to let likes and dislikes mingle with my action. I neither like nor dislike Lincoln. I like him better than Ben Butler! would to-day, on the whole, trust him rather than Fremont. I like him better than Dix or John Brough;¹ but if the drifting system, which Seward practically advocates, does not bring us out by the 1st of September, with the help of God and the people, I verily believe that the people will be so tired of it that if on that day they find themselves fastened to Lincoln by a previous convention they will drop their heads in despair and let McClellan come in and make peace for them, — perhaps after a triangular fight. On the other hand, if on the 1st September the present system of floating along by the impulse of the people or the will of God brings us out anywhere near port, or with any tolerable hope of reaching port, we may all feel, as we do now about the first Bull Run, that the delays and hesitations and shortcomings were providential, and we shall be content to go along with a pilot who takes his orders from the crew, instead of with a leader who directs our course.

Beyond all this, if we are to have Mr. Lincoln, whose personal honesty and whose strength with the

¹ Governor of Ohio in 1864. He died in 1865. — ED.

people certainly make him the most likely person to be chosen —

Here ends the draft; the complete letter must have been sent, for Mr. Curtis replies on the 8th of May, thanking him heartily for it, but urging all the reasons, which prevailed afterwards with the Republican party, for nominating at once, and adding, "In no conspicuous man do I see met such a union of admirable qualities for the work in hand as in Mr. Lincoln. He has a providential temperament for this emergency; honesty, fidelity, sagacity, conviction, and an infinite patience."

There is nothing to show whether my father was converted at once to Mr. Curtis's views so ably urged, but plenty that he threw himself heart and soul into the campaign the moment after Mr. Lincoln was nominated.¹ Apropos of this, I have received the following from Mr. Edward Atkinson, dated February 15, 1899, in reply to a request that he should give any characteristic anecdote which he might remember of my father. He writes: —

"At his instance a meeting was called for the purpose of raising money for the second Lincoln campaign. It was held in a large side office, of which I had the control. Some fifteen or twenty men came in. After the hour had been reached, your father suggested to me to lock the door, and we looked around the meeting. He said, 'How much is this meeting good for?' To which I re-

¹ At the Chicago Convention, held early in June, 1864.

plied, 'About twenty thousand dollars.' 'Well,' said he, 'don't unlock the door until we have got it.' The matter was discussed, and in his usual manner he led off with a large subscription, and before we unlocked the door we had twenty-three thousand dollars. He always led on any line that he thought others should follow."

So far with regard to the spirit with which he entered the campaign. Before it began, his mind must have been relieved of a great weight.

Ever since his letter to Mr. Rathbone of the 31st of October, 1863, though the Laird rams had continued to be detained by process of law, the British government had appeared to be backing and filling as to whether they could or would prevent their getting out in any case. In April, 1864, my father again wrote to this correspondent, no doubt repeating his arguments and warnings; for Mr. Rathbone, writing from Liverpool on the 14th of May, said:

"I send you a paper with yesterday's debate in it. Since I received your letter I have been so busy working at the ideas it suggested that I have been unable to answer it.

"I sent Mr. Baring an extract, and also several of our leading men, and I believe the arguments have had weight. Not that people in England share your views about the present strength of the North; the Federal cause is thought in great danger just now, but that made the discussion of the question more easy.

"We sent up a very weightily signed petition from

the Liverpool shipowners, signed by all the first men here, the present, last, and a previous chairman of the shipowner's association, the present and previous chairman of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, etc., etc."

Twelve days later, on May 26, 1864, Mr. Rathbone wrote: "You will be glad to hear that Laird's rams are at last disposed of to the English government; and it is the opinion of the government that they have put a stop to fitting out ships."

This was indeed good news to my father, and he must have gone into the presidential campaign with a mind greatly relieved, even before the tidings came of the naval and military victories at Mobile and Atlanta.

After my father's death, remembering a conversation which I had had with Mr. Rathbone in London, three years before, I wrote to him, asking for the particulars of what he had then told me. His reply, given below, contains very interesting details as to the events which immediately preceded the final disposition of the rams, and also his own estimate, that of one very competent to judge, as to the importance of my father's services on his mission to England in 1863, and afterwards:—

GREEN BANK, LIVERPOOL, E.,

December 16, 1898.

DEAR MRS. HUGHES, — I have to thank you for your letter of the 24th of November. I wish I could find Mr. Forbes's letter to me, pointing out

that to let the "rams," building by Lairds, sail would inevitably bring about a war between the United States and England, but I have changed houses twice since then, and am afraid it is quite hopeless.

What happened was this: I received letters, I think, from your father and uncle, showing clearly that if the "rams" sailed, the friends of peace between the two countries would be powerless; as the only thing which prevented a declaration of war by the United States, in consequence of the depredations of the Alabama, was the fear of the blockade being raised, which might extend the civil war for ten years longer; and if the "rams" sailed, the blockade would be broken by them, as none of the American wooden ships could withstand them.

I went straight up to London, saw Mr. Thomas Baring, Mr. Cobden, Mr. Forster, and others at a breakfast for the purpose, at Mr. Thomas Baring's. They realized at once the danger of the crisis, and urged me to see Lord Palmerston. I was perfectly astonished at the ignorance of our statesmen generally, and of Lord Palmerston in particular, as to the inevitable effect a maritime war would have on a commerce like ours. They forgot the effect of the treaty of Paris, in making convoys absolutely obsolete and useless as a protection of our ships. They seemed unaware of the extraordinary change which the improvements in steam had made in the power of steamers keeping to sea, without going into port. They were equally ignorant of how absolutely useless and futile the then state of the law

was to prevent ships of war from being built in a neutral country with perfect impunity.

I was able to meet all Lord Palmerston's remarks and suggestions from information that had come to my knowledge as a shipowner and a very close student (with the best assistance) of laws bearing upon the state of our mercantile marine. Lord Palmerston apparently saw the full force of the various points I was able to lay before him after the consultation I had had with Mr. Baring, Mr. Cobden, and others. He said he quite realized the importance of the facts I had laid before him, and listened with very great patience; and when I had concluded, asked me whether there were any other points which I could and wished to suggest. I said I thought I had laid before him sufficient to show that the sailing of the "rams" meant war with America and the destruction of our mercantile marine.

Three days afterwards, the "rams" were stopped, and purchased by the government. Of course, it is probable that he had received on some of the different points I had urged upon him confirmatory advice and information. He admitted the great importance of the facts I had given him, and promised that they should be most carefully considered by the Cabinet; and I was under the impression that he himself was convinced. And I have always believed that the Messrs. Forbes's letters and Mr. John Forbes's previous exertions in favor of peace prevented a war between the two countries.

With all good wishes for the coming, and many
New Years,

Believe me, yours faithfully,

W. RATHBONE.

Mr. Rathbone, in 1864, was a leading merchant
in Liverpool. Four years later he became a member
of Parliament.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SUMMER OF 1864

AT the end of the first half of the year 1864, McClellan had been nominated by the Democracy, and the campaign was now in full swing. I recollect a caricature suggested by my father, not well executed, but sufficiently indicating his view of the situation, in which the Democratic candidate was represented as trying to stand with one foot on a war horse and the other on a peace donkey, and finding the team hard to drive.

Among his files I find the following letter from Mr. Sedgwick describing the result of the vote on the recruiting bill, a measure which my father had much at heart.

C. B. SEDGWICK TO J. M. FORBES.

WASHINGTON, D. C., SUNDAY MORNING,
July 3, 1864.

Governor Andrew reached here yesterday P. M., and spent the night at the Capitol. I saw him on his arrival. They have finally settled the enrollment bill, — not very satisfactorily, but as well as you could expect when you consider the opposing influences. I send you the substance of it from this

morning's "Chronicle." Doubtless the governor will telegraph you what it is. You will see that you have no time to lose.

I shall leave for home this evening or in the morning, pretty well used up and tired out, but not disheartened. We have n't been thrashed quite enough yet. We ought to be whipped into that humble frame of mind which will make us willing to get soldiers of any color, and enlist them without scruple even in the enemy's country.

This enrollment bill, allowing recruiting in rebel States for sixty days, appears to have become law on the following day, and to have been acted on at once by Governor Andrew and the Massachusetts Recruiting Board, of which my father was chairman.

There was now to be added to this and his other public work anxiety on account of his son, Major Forbes, who was taken prisoner near Aldie Gap, Virginia, on the 6th of July, by Mosby, the famous guerrilla leader. That Major Forbes behaved gallantly, his father did not need to be assured; but it was a pleasure to him to read what Colonel Mosby wrote, when the war was over:—

"One of the regiments I most frequently encountered was from about Boston, the Second Massachusetts, Colonel Lowell. I once met a detachment of it, under command of a Major Forbes, of Boston, and although our encounter resulted in his overthrow, he bore himself with conspicuous gallantry."

His sabre, lodged in his opponent's shoulder, had sprung from his hand in the shock, and his horse, shot dead by a bullet aimed at the rider by Mosby himself, pinned him down, before he surrendered. He was taken to various places in the South, suffering a good deal from poor sanitary conditions, but otherwise well treated. Once he escaped with three companions, but was recaptured; and finally, he was at first released on parole, and then exchanged, in time to take part in the final cavalry dash under Sheridan before Lee's surrender.

During the month which followed his son's capture, I find that my father, without any slackening of his public work, was bending part of his energies to getting money to my brother, mainly by drafts on the Barings forwarded to Savannah to some business friends of an old Wood's Hole neighbor, Mr. Fay; and sometimes by greenbacks sent in through flags of truce. Of one of these my father says, "The little missive failed to reach William at Macon, but it followed him around in rebel hands until it reached him either in Charleston, or at Columbia, South Carolina." And he speaks gratefully of the good faith on this and other occasions "of the Confederates in allowing remittances to be sent to prisoners."

Meanwhile public affairs were beginning to look brighter. The Alabama had at last been destroyed. Mr. G. V. Fox writes from the Navy Department on the 14th July, satisfied with that event, though regretting the escape of her captain on an English yacht. He adds:—

“Has not that infernal craft taken the ‘bloom’ from Hatteras, Port Royal, Roanoke, Fort Donaldson, Arkansas Post, Shiloh, the Merrimac, and Atlanta, the blockade of 3,500 miles and the crowning glory of New Orleans?” And continuing as to Early’s raid, during which my brother had been taken prisoner: “The rebs have just made off with more plunder than has entered all the blockaded ports since the war commenced. It was an attempt with 20,000 men to break up Grant; but he was too calm and persistent to be caught. It is rather humiliating, but does not affect the campaign at all, the result of which is sure. . . . I am very sorry about the capture of your son. I doubt if anything can be done just now. No sporadic exchanges have been made for some time. Should anything of the kind be likely to happen, I will do everything in my power.”

Through the kindness of General Fessenden, Mr. W. P. Fessenden’s son, I am able to give a letter written at this time as to a serious danger relating to the maintenance of the blockade, of which private information had reached him. With his characteristic vigilance and promptitude, the matter was at once attended to:—

J. M. FORBES TO W. P. FESSENDEN.

NAUSHON ISLAND, *July 28, 1864.*

I have, through mercantile sources, reliable information that some plan is on foot for using private enterprise in maintaining the blockade. If this can

be done by charter, making the vessels outright ships of war, it may be safe to do it under very careful orders; but if it is contemplated to issue letters of marque to overhaul neutral commerce, it is full of danger, and the least that could come of it would be a war panic that must interfere seriously with your financial arrangements.

Under the best circumstances, the risk altogether overbalances the advantage of it, and I feel bound to call your attention to it as likely to cause serious embarrassment to your department.

When I was about embarking for England in March, 1863, a similar step was seriously contemplated, and it was then said had Mr. Seward's approval. I ventured to protest against it before sailing, and on arriving out found that the rumor of it had caused great alarm among our friends there, who considered it almost sure to bring on collision. Matters there are better now, but we cannot yet afford to quarrel with John Bull.

If you see the risk as I do, I hope you will still be able to stop it by prompt action. It comes to me confidentially (but surely), so I hope you will use the information carefully. I have no right to withhold it from you, as it seems to me to involve a grave public danger, or at best a very hazardous experiment, at a time when we cannot afford to run any more risks.

The autumn began with anything but a confident feeling on the part of my father and his chief cor-

respondents. On the 5th of September Mr. Sedgwick writes to him from Syracuse : —

“ I felt for some weeks in a despairing mood about Lincoln : feared it would be impossible to elect him without early and important military successes. Atlanta has turned the tide and it is running in his favor. No man ever was elected to an important office who will get so many unwilling and indifferent votes as L. The cause takes the man along ; but the unthinking multitude will be for him if he is successful by land and sea.”

Another letter from Mr. Sedgwick, after expressing sorrow at not being able to join his friend in Washington, adds : “ I hope you will succeed in your most laudable purpose of getting the administration to declare war ! ”

About the same time Mr. W. C. Bryant writes from the office of the New York “ Evening Post ” as to the “ Seward and Weed faction which is filling all the offices [there] with its creatures,” and further says : “ I am so utterly disgusted with Lincoln’s behavior that I cannot muster respectful terms in which to write to him.”¹

My father speaks of September and October, 1864, as “ the most exciting, if not the most depressing, period of the war ; ” and so at least it seems to have been for him. At the beginning of September,

¹ My father had asked Mr. Bryant to write to the President, urging an appeal to the “ hard-handed people of the country ” to support him “ on a plain square issue,” *i. e.* the uncompromising prosecution of the war. — Ed.

Messrs. Seward, Greeley, and others had been combining with Vallandigham to negotiate, at Niagara Falls, a plan of compromise which roused my father to unusually vigorous protests. He writes to Mr. Fox: —

J. M. FORBES TO G. V. FOX.

YACHT AZALEA, *September 6, 1864.*

N. East gale, bound to New Bedford.

I was so disheartened by what I heard in New York that I cannot help trying to do and say something to help. I heard there, from what seemed to be the best authority, that thoughts were still entertained by the administration of opening negotiations with the rebel leaders. Thurlow Weed is desperate as to our political success, and Raymond of the "Times," Chairman of the National Committee, and his paper, the out and out champion of Mr. Lincoln, is giving intimations that indicate this disposition to patch up a peace, on what he vaguely calls honorable terms. These indications are paralyzing the Republican and the Union party; and if a new keynote cannot be struck, the campaign will go by default, or will depend only on brilliant success by Grant for any chance of success. We cannot for a moment compete with the Copperheads in bidding for terms of surrender, or call it peace if you like, nor can we meet the rebels in diplomacy. Their blacklegs and jockeys from S. to B., desperate, wily, practiced, and unscrupulous, can beat us all to shivers; and everything we have done, or can do, will only be turned against us in the election, or in the

field, by encouraging their people and discouraging ours, or used with foreign powers for intervention. Until their military power is broken, nothing but hard knocks in the field, and a bold, square war policy at home, will give us any shadow of a chance to succeed.

. . . If the milk and water policy of trying to negotiate with the rebels while their armies exist is attempted, earnest men will feel that it is a mere contest for party power, and that perhaps the war Democrats may react upon the peace party, and make McClellan just as likely to save the Union as we should be. Peace negotiation is their thunder. Let us not try to steal it, but with all firmness and moderation insist upon war, until the rights of the people, North and South, are safe from subversion. Peace can only mean with such enemies, cheating : it can only be a truce, giving them time to arm and make treaties with foreign nations, and negotiate with our border and Copperhead States for free trade seduction. There is no peace possible, and talking of it will destroy the Republican and Union party, and practically put Vallandigham and Wood into the White House.

I have everything at stake in the army ; my son and my son-in-law are there — my younger son training to go. All the young men that I love or value are there or incapacitated. I want peace for their sakes ; I hate war for its own sake ; but I solemnly protest against crying “ Peace ” when there is no peace. It only means a short truce, defeat at

the election, and then prolonged war with an invigorated enemy, perhaps strengthened with foreign alliances. If I had any political position or any eloquence, or had any power of moving the President, I would go and tell him this; but situated as I am, I feel that it would be a mere waste of his time and mine. If, however, you agree with me, you have his ear, and our combined voices might reach him. In that case, pray read him this letter, telling him it comes from one who has no political aspirations, and who only wants safety for free institutions, and a true peace; one who has no isms, and who is willing to trust to the negro's getting his rights, if we can only establish a true democracy; for the greater involves the lesser.

The only offices I ever held were that of presidential elector in 1860, and a seat in the Peace Congress.

Those who knew my father will easily picture him to themselves, driven to desperation by the way things were going, with his head down over the table, writing that northeasterly-gale-letter in the little cabin of the *Azalea*. What became of it appears from the following memorandum by his correspondent: —

WASHINGTON, D. C., *March 29, 1883.*

The original letter, of which the foregoing is a copy, was read to Mr. Lincoln, and if my memory is not at fault, I left that in his hands. He seldom read the newspapers during the war, but gathered

his information of the popular feeling from private letters and talks. He was always grateful for such disinterested and earnest letters as this, and I have no doubt that they had great influence in leading him towards those final conclusions to which he only arrived after patiently hearing all that any one wished to state.

His playing with "peace negotiations" in 1864 was a repetition of that profound and secretive policy which marked his course with regard to Fort Sumter in 1861. Many of the leaders, even those close to him, thought him to be a "simple-minded man." He was the deepest, the closest, the cutest, and the most ambitious man American politics has produced.

G. V. Fox.

The letter to Mr. Fox was followed, the next day, by a circular to "Mr. George Bancroft and others of the older war Democrats" (who seemed to him to form too large a retired list), with much the same ring in it, asking for a conference with them on the following Sunday in New York. Of this he writes in his notes, "It resulted in no meeting, but in a good deal of personal and written consultation, and perhaps helped to lead up to the great public rally at the Cooper Institute in New York, which was one of the turning points of the political campaign." I find that this rally was preceded by a feeling of depression on the part of my father and his friends in New York and Boston, who saw that the Niagara Falls peace negotiation was paralyzing the Union

party, and concluded that "the only card to play" against it was a popular meeting. As to what followed, he wrote, in 1885, the following note, for his friend Thomas Hughes : —

"I pushed on again to New York to see what could be done, and the first step was to see our Nestor, Peter Cooper, not then so well known outside of Manhattan Island as he has been since. When asked for advice and letters of introduction to leading men, he curtly replied, 'There is no time for letters or palavers; get with me into my buggy.' The horse was soon at his office door, or already there tied to a lamp-post or to a weight, and away trotted the vigorous old merchant, with his queer hat and his keen eye, whip in hand, ready even then, after all our blunders, to take the war by contract and 'put it through by daylight,' as the old stage-drivers used to advertise their routes! From door to door we drove, through the crowded streets, stirring up one timid friend, holding back the next who wanted some other method, and insisting against delay, or doubt, or change of plans; and in half the time anybody else would have taken, he (with the big Cooper Institute open at his nod) settled the great meeting of the period, when the brains and force of New York gave the keynote to the voices of the country for making no compromise, no step backward while such a contest at the polls was going on, until by hard knocks the back of the rebellion should be broken and a real peace secured."

The prospect was now brightening, and Mr. Sedgwick could write from Syracuse : —

“The old enthusiasm is reviving here. We have enlisted a new regiment in this county in a fortnight; and men enough to make another go into the organizations in the field. Atlanta and Mobile have lifted us out of the slough of despond. If you can wake up the Rip Van Winkles at Washington all will yet be well.”

Whether excited or depressed, my father never lost sight of the question of ways and means; and we find him writing from Naushon, on the 8th of September, to Mr. W. P. Fessenden, now Secretary of the Treasury, thus : —

“The inclosed cutting from the ‘Evening Post’ embodies my views as to one mode of filling our treasury.

“Let the capitalists at home and abroad see that the *people* are coming to the treasury for investments, and it will be the best possible stimulant to capitalists at home and abroad to come in while gold is high. Let the popular rills begin to fill your cistern, and capitalists will be sharp enough to take the hint, and then each will act favorably on the other.

“If the idea is worth anything, that shrewd old fox, Louis Napoleon, may claim a patent for it. He issued bonds down to twenty francs, I think = four gold dollars. . . .

“I continue unalterably opposed to more inflation of the currency, and I hope you can give the

people some \$10 security which cannot be used to inflate the currency, in other words something which is not a legal tender."

In the following month my father writes in his notes:—

"I had been much struck while in England in the preceding year by the logical and scholarly support given our cause by Professor Goldwin Smith. It was perhaps not so whole-souled as that of Bright and Cobden, but its judicial tone made it quite as effective. He was now on his first visit to America, and I intended to bring him into contact with such men as would best post him as to the true state of affairs and opinions in the North."

My father wrote with this intention to the professor, who accepted his invitation to Naushon, and added: "I am as sensible as you can desire me to be of the fact that the Democratic party, so-called, is an oligarchy conspiring with a mob; somewhat analogous to the conspiracy of the French emperor with the most ignorant part of the French peasantry against the party of liberty in France. Confusion wait on their banners in the approaching struggle! For if they win and reimpose upon you the yoke of the planter, it is over with the liberal cause, not only here, but in other countries for many a day."

A letter from my father to Mr. R. W. Emerson invites him to be at Naushon at the same time:—

J. M. FORBES TO RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

NAUSHON, *October 3, 1864.*

I write partly to remind you of your promise to be on the 10.30 train of Saturday, 8th, partly to interest you to expedite Mr. Smith's advent, and make sure of his being there with you, to meet, I hope, Mr. William Cullen Bryant and some others. . . .

We had yesterday a sad letter from Lowell;¹ do not blush for me, but I wanted to cry, over a horse! When W. was taken I begged Lowell to use his two remaining horses (Beauregard, you know, being killed under him when captured). Soon after the late Sheridan campaign began, Lowell had one of the horses shot under him, leaving little Billy; and now he writes that little Billy had three more balls through him in a charge on Breckinridge's guns, brought him off the field, and fell to rise no more! He had been hit three times before, under Lowell, but had recovered; and a letter was on the way withdrawing him from active service until his master returned; Will's last letter saying, "If Billy is to be shot again, it must be with me on him!" Poor fellow, he was the best horse in the regiment and we all loved him; and his master will only half enjoy his release when this news comes; but of course I could not have withheld him.

My father's notes remark, apropos of Billy: —

"When Will got his commission he was very anxious to be mounted from the island; but at the

¹ Colonel Charles Russell Lowell. — ED.

time of his starting to join his regiment we had searched in vain for a horse, stout enough to carry his weight, among the thirty or forty colts which, with high pedigrees, had descended from the famous thoroughbred Bob Logic. We at last found a sturdy pony-built bay, the product of a rough plebeian mare by an unknown father. Amidst all his patrician associates, however, Billy was the only fit one to mount his young master; and, indeed, for hard service he proved the best among a regiment of 1200 horses; he could go furthest, jump highest, and upon hard fare come out brightest of the whole; and when he returned home from Antietam, I remember him reduced in weight to about 900 pounds, but still cheerful, easy, and strong. He was with Will all through his campaigns until he was captured by Mosby in 1864. . . . Lowell said [that] while his brigade was preparing, he walked up and down debating whether to take Billy or some other trooper's horse; but he knew I should not hesitate. I only wish we had a historian who could better tell the story of 'a horse without a pedigree.' "

Of the party to meet Mr. Smith at Naushon, my father continues in his notes:—

"The proposed visit came off, with much valuable interchange of ideas. William Cullen Bryant was prevented from coming, but, besides Mr. Emerson and Charles Sedgwick, John Weiss and George Ward were of the party, which fully answered the intended purpose. They arrived, seasick and woe-begone, after a very rough passage from New Bed-

ford, in the Azalea; but soon revived, and were able to enjoy the island mutton, seasoned with profitable conversation."

It was of this meeting that Mr. Emerson wrote the words which are given at the beginning of this book. I append here the whole of the passage as it originally stood in his journal; and as it was given by his son, Dr. E. W. Emerson, in a letter to the "Boston Herald," just after my father's death:—

"October 12, 1864. Returned from Naushon, whither I went on Saturday with Professor —, of Oxford University, and Mr. —. Mr. Forbes at Naushon is the only 'squire' in Massachusetts, and no nobleman ever understood or performed his duties better. I divided my admiration between the landscape of Naushon and him. He is an American to be proud of. Never was such free, good meaning, good sense, good action, combined with such domestic, lovely behavior, and such modesty and persistent preference of others. Wherever he moves he is a benefactor.

"It is of course that he should shoot well, ride well, sail well, administer railroads well, carve well, keep house well, but he was the best talker also in the company, with the perpetual practical wisdom seeing always the working of the thing, with the multitude and distinction of his facts (and one detects continually that he has had a hand in everything that has been done), and in the temperance with which he parries all offense and opens the eyes of his interlocutor without contradicting him. I

have been proud of my countrymen, but I think this is a good country that can breed such a creature as John M. Forbes.

“There was something dramatic in the conversation on Monday night, between Professor —, Forbes, and —, chiefly, the Englishman being evidently alarmed at the new prospect of the retaliation of America’s standing in the identical position soon, in which England, now and lately, has stood to us, and playing the same part toward her. Forbes a year ago was in Liverpool and London, entreating them to respect their own neutrality, and disallow the piracy and the blockade running, and hard measure to us in their colonial ports, etc. And now, so soon, the parts were entirely reversed, and Professor — was showing us the power and irritability of England, and the certainty that war would follow if we should build and arm a ship in one of our ports and send her out to sea, and at sea sell her to their enemy; which would be a proceeding strictly in accordance with her present proclaimed law of nations.

“At Naushon I recalled what Captain John Smith said of the Bermudas, and I think as well of Mr. Forbes’s fences, which are cheap and steep: ‘No place known hath better walls or a broader ditch.’

“I came away saying to myself of J. M. F., ‘How little this man suspects, with his sympathy for men and his respect for lettered and scientific people, that he is not likely ever to meet a man who is superior to himself.’”

On the day on which Mr. Emerson was making this entry in his diary, Mr. Adams was writing to my father from Kingston, Derbyshire:—

“I learn to-day that Semmes is off again in a screw steamer, called the Laurel, taking eight officers and a hundred men, with six guns as cargo. This is provoking enough. If you could catch the concern, I doubt whether anybody would cry. I note what you say about matters at Washington. On the whole, the country is wonderfully firm. The government will, I think, be sustained.”

So it would appear that Mr. Adams was now satisfied of there being no “prospect for restoration and reconciliation,” save through the utter prostration of the South and the abolition of slavery.

Now came what to my father was, I think, the hardest personal loss of the war; the death, namely, on the 19th of October, of Brigadier-General Charles Russell Lowell, Jr., nephew of the poet, at the battle of Cedar Creek. This is what General Sheridan wrote of him to my father in 1881:—

“He had three horses killed under him at the first battle of Winchester (September 19, 1864), and on the morning of October 19, Cedar Creek, same year, he was mortally wounded while holding an advance position with his brigade on the left of the retreating army, in the village of Middletown. On my arrival on the field, my first order was sent to General Lowell through an aide-de-camp, to hold the position he then occupied if it was possible. His

reply was that he would, and when the final charge was made by the whole line in the evening, he was lifted on his horse, but could only whisper his last order for his men to mount and advance against the enemy.

“I watched him closely during the campaign, and had he survived that day at Cedar Creek, it was my intention to have more fully recognized his gallantry and genius by obtaining for him promotion in rank, and a command which would have enlarged his usefulness and have given more scope to his remarkable abilities as a leader of men.”

My father had admired and loved Charles Lowell from the time when they first met in 1856. The younger man's alert, ready mind, keen wit, and indomitable courage had endeared him to a spirit to which exactly those qualities most appealed. And his interest in him had become keener when, at the time of his employment on the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad, he had refused a brilliant prospect in India held out to him by Mr. Ashburner. To the latter, in England, I find my father writing on December 12, 1864: —

“Making up my old files, I came upon a most characteristic letter from Lowell, and my wife wishes you to have a copy of it, which she has made. With his taste, refinement, consciousness of intellectual power, and his love of the beautiful, I can hardly conceive of any greater temptation, since the Lord was taken into a high place, than that which you set before Lowell (I don't mean to extend the com-

parison on your side !), situated as he was in that dull place, amid rough men, and away from all that was tasteful and pleasant. His letter shows how the temptation came to him, and how it was resisted. It took more solid character, more self-sacrifice, than many a desperate charge, — and he made some before which that of Balaklava will not, or should not, stand in more heroic colors. If you have no objection, — suppressing your name if you wish it, — I think this letter should be published when his life is written. He had a taste for luxury, a delicate frame, his family looking to him for help ; yet how loyally and bravely he rejects wealth and position, offered him, too, in such a flattering way ! One of the strange things has been how he magnetized you and me at first sight ! We are both practical, unsentimental, and perhaps hard, at least externally, yet he captivated me just as he did you, and I came home and told my wife I had fallen in love ; and from that day I never saw anything too good or too high for him, — more knowledge confirming first impressions. But he is gone, and leaves us only memory of a genius departed.”

About a year before his death, Colonel Lowell, as he was then, had married our cousin Josephine, a sister of the Robert Shaw who fell at Fort Wagner. The following extract from one of his letters to her, she sent to my father after her husband’s death. I find it among his papers, and she kindly allows me to print it. It may well follow what I have quoted

above, as expressing Charles Lowell's feeling towards his friend of many years:—

CAMP BRIGHTWOOD, *June 17, 1863.*

. . . I wonder whether I shall ever be able to repay cousin John in any way for his many kindnesses, and for the many pleasant days and evenings I have passed at Milton and Naushon. Do you know that after Chancellorsville¹ he wrote that he had more than a half a mind to come home at once to help raise a new army, and if necessary to take a musket himself? Perhaps one of these days I may have a chance to do something to gratify him. I wonder whether my theories about self-culture, etc., would ever have been modified so much — whether I should ever have seen what a necessary failure they lead to — had it not been for this war: *now*, I feel every day, more and more, that a man has no right to himself at all; that indeed he can do nothing useful unless he recognizes this clearly; nothing has helped me to see this last truth more than watching Mr. Forbes. I think he is one of the most unselfish workers I ever knew of; it is painful here to see how sadly personal motives interfere with most of our officers' usefulness. After the war, how much there will be to do; and how little opportunity a fellow in the field has to prepare himself for the sort of doing that will be required. It makes me quite sad sometimes; but then I think of cousin John, and remember how

¹ When my father was in London. — Ed.

much he always manages to do in every direction without any previous preparation, simply by pitching in, honestly and entirely — and I reflect that the great secret of *doing*, after all, is in seeing what *is* to be done.

With this spontaneous eulogy I close the brief mention of a friendship to which my father looked back with tenderness to the end of his life, thirty-four years later.

And now of Lincoln's reëlection and of other matters, my father wrote to his old friend, Mr. Aspinwall, in New York : —

J. M. FORBES TO W. H. ASPINWALL.

MILTON, *November 25, 1864.*

I stopped to vote and then went down to Washington with my daughter¹ and her baby; and thence with Fox to Grant's headquarters, where we picked up the general and brought him back to Norfolk and Fortress Monroe, Admiral Porter having joined us at the Fortress on our way down. They had thus consultations in which I am happy to say the public did not participate; and out of old Grant there is no getting anything, even if one were so indiscreet as to try.

He talked in some such way, as he would, about the rebs having robbed the cradle and the grave for conscripts, and spoke of deserters daily coming in and confirming his ideas of their exhaustion; but

¹ Mary, the wife of Colonel H. S. Russell. — ED.

he talks very little, and all such things are rather drawn out of him than volunteered. . . .

I have seen Colonel Cole, Cobden's cousin, and had him to dine at the Club two days since : he was just from the front, and says the Dutch Gap Canal can probably be opened any time, and he thinks the river will sweep through and make it a short cut, but he has no idea what the plan of using it is. Goldwin Smith has gone through, with Ben Butler, to the front ; then visits Seward ; so you have my budget of gossip. . . .

I hear of my son being alive and cooking¹ on 1st November ; and *from* him in October, and hourly look for his parole. If all goes right with him, we may go to Washington three weeks hence, to a house which I have secured there.

In December, 1864, the United States minister to Paris, Mr. Dayton, died. It was a post only less important than that of minister to London. My father advocated the appointment of Mr. Bigelow, and I find a letter from Mr. Evarts agreeing with him, and saying that he also had "given his voice" for him.

The Massachusetts senator appears to have been of a different mind : —

¹ As a prisoner of war at Columbia, South Carolina. He used to boast greatly of his sweet potato pies, and made us an excellent one on his return home. — ED.

CHARLES SUMNER TO J. M. FORBES.

SENATE CHAMBER, *December 31, 1864.*

I have your note of the 29th December. I don't know whether in my former letter I expressed to you the rule which I think should govern the President on this occasion : it is to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of Mr. Dayton as he would fill up the gap if Sherman should suddenly die in Georgia. In each case the best man, he who can serve the country best, should be selected, without regard to the minor considerations of where he comes from or where he is now. Carrying out this idea, the person who, all things considered, could serve the country best, could do most to strengthen us at Paris at this time, is, in my judgment, Mr. Everett.

Mr. Bigelow would, of course, continue to act as consul, and we should have two strong men there instead of one. . . .

But I may be doomed to disappointment. Will it not go to a politician ? Who knows ?

By this time Mr. Chase had left the Treasury, and had been appointed, in December, 1864, Chief Justice on the Supreme Court of the United States, and Mr. Fessenden had temporarily given up his seat in the Senate and his chairmanship of the Committee on Finance, and was filling the gap at the Treasury till a permanent chief secretary should be appointed.

As to this, my father writes to Mr. Fessenden : —

J. M. FORBES TO W. P. FESSENDEN.

BOSTON, *January 11, 1865.*

The more we think of a successor to you in the Treasury, the more unfortunate it seems that you must go. Where shall we look for a man big enough to begin to fill your place?

If it is a foregone conclusion that you must go, one thing is clear, that we ought to put forward the best man that is left; for now that our military affairs go so well, the next great battle is to be fought in the money market, and you or some other first-class general must lead.

I think your experience will confirm the opinion which I hold, that no mere merchant or banker ought to be put there, in such a crisis. If we had an Alexander Hamilton, who had slipped down into commercial life, he might do; but the mere knowledge of detail and of the course of business, which you would get in any commercial man, will be more than counterbalanced by his having certain fixed notions about small things which will eternally be standing in the way of big ones.

I see the New York papers want a merchant there, and I hear several named, yet none of them is big enough.

The moment you positively decide to go, you of course want to throw upon your successor the responsibility, jointly with Congress, for the work he is to do after you abdicate; and I take it that this and other considerations will make immediate action necessary whenever you do decide to go.

New York has got one member of the cabinet; but, for God's sake, give her another if she can offer a first-class man.

I should as soon hesitate about keeping Grant, and Sherman, and Thomas, and Farragut, if they all belonged to one section or one State, as to hesitate about putting into the Treasury the best man we have, irrespective of state lines; but I happen to know no New Yorker who has just the right qualifications. New England ought to be represented in the cabinet by her best man, and this brings me to my point. Governor Andrew is going out of office here after this year, and can go out without great damage to our state affairs any time, on sixty days' notice. He will not voluntarily run against Wilson for the Senate; but if the legislature and people say so, neither he nor any other man can refuse to serve the State in any post during the war.

He ought to be in the cabinet, and while, for his own sake, his friends would like to see him in some other place less arduous and less dangerous, he is in my judgment the next best man, after you, for the place. I have summered and wintered him for five years of war and trouble, and while he represents the most advanced opinions on politics, I know no man who so fully unites tact and judgment with perseverance and force. You probably know all this as well as I do, and you will see the cruelty, too, of asking any friend to go into such a battle as impends; but if I read him aright, he is bound to go wherever duty calls, even if it were into the veri-

table battlefield. He will not consider himself or his interests, all of which point to his returning to his family and his profession, from which he has been practically divorced since the war broke out. But we cannot afford to lose him from public life, even if there is danger of his being expended.

I shall probably be in Washington about the 18th, and only write because I suppose immediate action about some of the cabinet offices may be taken, and one change probably involves others. I know all about your delicacy at interfering, but you will of course be called upon for advice as to your successor, and so, as usual, I cannot help putting in my suggestion. I congratulate you personally upon your prospect of getting out.

My father evidently wrote to Governor Andrew also, suggesting that he should be a candidate for the Treasury ; but he replied, declining, and added:

“For myself, I should dread to undertake any place but that of attorney-general. My legal training and tastes would help me to master its duties ; while the functions and the opportunities for usefulness in that office are such as peculiarly tempt me to risk a failure for the sake of the chance of doing good, according to my way of thinking, which it affords.

“I think that the administration lacks coherence, method, purpose, and consistency ; not in the sense which impugns its patriotism, or its philanthropic will either, but in a sense which affects its intelligent

unity of purpose. God has so made the world of matter and of mind both, that nothing can work well which is not moved and operated from its centre, rather than its circumference. This is eminently true, whether of a school district, an army, or an empire, and not less of a water-wheel, or of the infinite system of the sidereal heavens. In our cabinet, the law officer is the one who, if either, can best promote that unity and coherence needful and missing now—the finding of that centre on which mere action must revolve, or else degenerate into wild and abnormal agitation. Now perhaps I should find I had missed my vocation; but I have will, patience, faith, good temper, and a clear purpose. From boy to man for thirty years, I have been looking and working in one direction. When I cannot see, I do not the less believe. I am conscious of no very great personal ambition. Still I enjoy public life, if it is only active, working, and useful. And while I am far from sure that I should not serve better others and myself by going, at the end of this year, into private life, and waiting until (and always remaining there unless) a clear call, like that of 1860, may command me to try my hand again, I am still ready to report for duty as a drafted man, if others who can judge fairly, think it best I should. I do not perceive how I can be of any special use compared with many others, in any of the cabinet places, unless in the one I have named.”

Governor Andrew appears to have seen some prospect of the attorney-generalship being vacant.

Subsequent correspondence shows that the office was not offered to him ; and as to the secretaryship of the treasury, it will be seen that, very soon after this, my father became satisfied, from personal intercourse, of Mr. McCulloch's being the best man for that office.

CHAPTER XVIII

A WINTER IN WASHINGTON

DECEMBER, 1864, had been fixed on for the removal of our family to Washington, where my father had taken a house for two years. He does not give in his notes the object of this plan; but he doubtless wished to be at the centre of things at this most interesting period; and both he and my mother wanted to be near the army and to keep within call of my brother, who, though at the moment at home on parole, was likely at any time to be exchanged and to return to his regiment in Virginia.

This exchange was not effected until the following March; and so Christmas, at Milton, was made glad by his return; and the removal was postponed until January, when we all migrated to Washington.

My father entertained, in an informal way, a good deal. Among our guests were Mr. Sumner, then at the head of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs; Senators Grimes and Fessenden; and Mr. McCulloch, then an officer in the Treasury, and soon to succeed Mr. Fessenden as Secretary of that department. Mr. McCulloch became an *habitué* of the house, and I can remember endless talks be-

tween him and my father on the withdrawal of the surplus of greenbacks from circulation, and the general contraction of the currency with a view to a return to specie payment. It seemed to me then a very dry subject, and I am reminded that it is not one of thrilling interest to the general reader even now; and so I shall only give short extracts from the letters which passed between them after our return to Milton. It was a most interesting and exciting time, that winter in Washington. As I find in the notes: "We saw all sorts of people at our house, from soldiers and statesmen down to the old residents. Most of the latter were rebels at heart, but kept up appearances; and many of them called out of curiosity or politeness." But at times calling, whether by "carriage company" or other people, was not to be undertaken lightly. The house which we occupied was on one of the good streets. It was large and sunny, but it fronted on what, in rainy weather, was a shallow canal of mud, rather than a street, along which you might have poled a flat-bottomed boat; and after there had been a few days of sunshine it became a trough of red dust which, as the long trains of army wagons with eighteen mules to the wagon ploughed through it, rose in clouds and filled one's mouth, eyes, and ears, and every cranny of the houses. It was not much better in the neighborhood of the public offices. In his notes my father says:—

"I remember as a specimen of the state of the streets, that I was once driving by the Post Office

Department in my heavy old Boston carriage, when, after a jolt in a mud hole, I saw my driver's heels go up into the air and then disappear with the horses; both the whippetrees had snapped; and the carriage was turned and shipwrecked directly across the track of the horse railroad. I had my foot in a moccasin from gout, and the mud was knee-deep between me and the sidewalk; so there was nothing for it but to sit and face the crowd of passengers, interrupted by our being across the track, until my man returned with the horses and two borrowed whippetrees, and hauled us out, — breaking the embargo, which had become quite embarrassing, as nobody hankered after the task of wading out and dragging the heavy carriage away from the track. At any rate, that was not the Washington method of doing business, which still smacked very much of the South."

My father made no record of any other unpleasant adventure at the capital, nor of any story likely to be of general interest, except the following. He speaks of the call at our house of one of the old residents already mentioned: —

"One of these gentlemen, who were all sure to be proud of any acquaintance with the rebel generals, one day by way of conversation remarked, 'The last time I was in this house I met a cousin of General Lee's, a very fine fellow, who came to a most melancholy end.' 'Well,' said I, 'what happened to General Lee's cousin?' 'He was captured in Tennessee as a spy, and executed.' I only re-

marked for the comfort of my aristocratic guest, that I regretted that so few of the rebel spies had been hanged; and the occurrence passed out of my mind until, some weeks after, the details of it accidentally came out as follows, — told us in the course of conversation at the dinner-table, by General Webster, an officer of high position on General Sherman's staff. At this distance of time I cannot at all do justice to the impression it made, told as it was by one perfectly familiar with the scenes, and with the actors in the tragedy; but the mere outline is worth preserving among the memories of those momentous days. I cannot fix the time when it occurred, but it was during the dark hours before the successes of Grant and Sherman and Thomas had given us anything like an assured hold upon the northern part of Tennessee. Our main army was around Nashville, but for various strategic or political reasons, considerable bodies of troops were scattered about that region, within twenty or thirty miles of headquarters, furnishing very tempting opportunities for sudden attacks by the rebels, whose sources of information, through their numerous friends around us, were abundant, while we were practically, if not nominally, in an enemy's country. One such outpost, consisting of one or two small regiments, was placed about twenty miles from Nashville, and was commanded by Colonel —, a graduate of West Point, and an officer of approved courage and experience. Returning one evening from his tour of duty, the colonel found at his

headquarters tent a new arrival at camp, and was informed by his second in command that it was Lieutenant-Colonel —, assistant adjutant of the general commanding, who was on a tour of inspection, and had just gone through the post and made a full examination of the numbers and condition of the troops, which he had pronounced eminently satisfactory. He was at that moment under the tent drawing an order for \$25 on headquarters, having run short of funds during a rather prolonged absence at the outposts. He presently appeared, paid his respects to the commandant, and then mounted and rode slowly off in the direction of another isolated camp some ten or twelve miles distant. It was just after sundown, and our tired colonel was about to throw off his clothes after a hard day's work, when a sort of intuition flashed across his mind. He called to his orderly to give him his horse, and told him to turn out the guard and then follow him, and, mounting hastily, he rode after the inspecting officer, who was slowly proceeding on his solitary ride. Gradually overtaking him in the dusk about a mile from the camp, he hailed him quietly, and, approaching him deliberately, told him that, upon reflection, he could not let him take that road, beset as it was with rebels, without an escort, which he had ordered to turn out, and which would be ready by the time they reached camp. The inspector remonstrated at the delay; he knew the road, was well mounted, and indifferent to the supposed danger, but, after some hesitation, he turned

and followed the colonel back. Passing a cross road, however, he pulled up, turned his horse down it, and said, 'As the upper road is dangerous, I will take this one, which is but little longer.' 'True,' said the colonel, 'and it leads through the camp of the 33d Regiment, where you might, indeed, get an escort, but ours is about ready; do come this way.' Both officers were armed, but our colonel, in carrying out his plan, had taken the part of showing no suspicion, thus not running the risk of an escape in the dark, and in doing this he found it necessary to lead the way, feeling all the time that if his suspicions were just and were perceived, his first knowledge of it would be a bullet from behind. Riding back to his tent, he asked the inspector to enter for a moment, and then directed the sentinel to hold him as prisoner. When the guard came up and the colonel entered the tent, he found the inspector with his head upon the table in an attitude of despair. Looking up, the prisoner said, 'Colonel ——, don't you know me? Have you forgotten West Point?' The prisoner was Captain —— of the rebel army, an own cousin of Robert E. Lee, and an old class-mate of our colonel.

"It was evident to the latter that he had captured a spy in the act of obtaining important intelligence for the enemy, for he had inspected other camps, and the opposing forces were so nicely balanced that the accurate report of each exposed outpost might well have turned the scale. The spy's only prayer to his old comrade, when he saw that his dis-

guise was penetrated, was, 'For God's sake have me shot!' A court-martial was immediately held, and the facts being beyond dispute, the spy was condemned to be hanged the next morning, an hour being fixed which gave the colonel time to telegraph the result to the general at headquarters, and ask permission to have the culprit shot. The time came for execution without any signs of a respite. That was indeed out of the question; but no alleviation was granted, and at noon the spy bravely died on the gallows.

"All this was told so graphically that it had ten times the effect which any written description could have."

Returning to financial matters, of which my father says that they had "then become almost the turning point of the war," I reduce to a mere extract a letter received by him at this time from Mr. Thomas Baring, giving, as he says, "the view of one of the soundest and most far-seeing of English bankers of our financial prospects and dangers."

THOMAS BARING TO J. M. FORBES.

LONDON; *February 4, 1865.*

. . . I am no finance doctor, but it seems to me that the greatest evil which ought to be avoided is an increase of the paper currency, and your plan of gradually funding a portion of this, and of the certificates of indebtedness, is a wise one, provided that by national receipts and taxation of some kind,

united, you are able to pay the dividends, and not obliged to continue a regular system of borrowing in order to pay interest. Then upon the return of peace, the exports of your produce, the reduction of imports, partly from economy, but more from your high tariff, and the return of the money lodged in various parts of Europe, must go far to rectify your exchange and bring greenbacks nearer to gold value, especially when they will be almost the only paper in circulation, and kept within bounds. Whether you can bear the transition from war, with all its attendant expenditures which keeps all your industries at work, and spreads money through so many channels, apparently enriching millions, without a great shrinking and commercial crisis, I am not wise enough to predict. . . .

I trust, however, that I may not live to have you a national enemy. As a personal friend, believe me always.

As may be guessed from the ending to Mr. Baring's letter, the friends of peace between the two countries were still apprehensive of a rupture. The revival of this feeling was probably due to Mr. Seward's dispatch on the Florida incident. Of this Professor Goldwin Smith writes to my father from Oxford on the 27th January, 1865:—

“Seward's dispatch about the Florida has made anything but a good impression here. When will the bearing and style of your politicians and journalists catch something of the grandeur of your nation?”

Few of us, however, in Washington, in those days, were troubling ourselves much with what people across the Atlantic were thinking or saying of us. The discussions over the thirteenth amendment to the Constitution, finally abolishing slavery, were in full swing. We had our fill of excitement over them, culminating on the 1st of February, when the debate closed and the amendment was passed by the required two thirds majority, with three to spare. It was a scene not likely to be forgotten by any one who took part in it, but I cannot remember whether or not my father was present with the rest of us. I find a letter written to him from New York by Mr. George Ward in the excitement of just having received the news by telegraph, which begins : —

“Thank God for the constitutional amendment! How happy you must have been to be in Washington when it was passed, and to remember how much you had done to bring it about!”

But the time had not yet come to sing a *Nunc Dimittis*. The end of the war was perhaps within view, but the embarrassments of the Treasury were pressing. I find a letter to Mr. Peter Cooper asking his coöperation in getting the wealthier “business men of the country” to come forward with a loan of \$100,000,000, “in such large sums as would set the example to the smaller investors, and so practically clear off arrearages and put the new Secretary comparatively at ease;” and to his old partner in Russell & Co., Mr. John C. Green, then in New York, with the same motive.

To Mr. A. A. Low, also in New York, he writes at this time, advocating the opening of Southern ports under proper regulations, as being, by this time, the best way to help "in breaking up the rebellion;" and adding, with an eye to the practical carrying out of the idea:—

"I have called the attention of friends in Boston to it, and hope our Chamber of Commerce will take some action; but New York has an almost exaggerated influence in all commercial matters, and if your chamber sees its importance as I do, I hope they will act upon it promptly, and send an influential delegation here to present their views to the President, the Secretaries of War and of the Treasury.

"If they do not, the next best thing is for you to write such a letter as can be shown to the President, and send it to some one here to bring before him. Any one else would be better than I, because Massachusetts is always suggesting practical ideas, and those in high places are tired of us!"

At this period his friend, Governor Andrew, wrote to him as to his own plans, thus:—

GOVERNOR ANDREW TO J. M. FORBES.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS,
Executive Department,
BOSTON, *March 25, 1865.*

I think that there will be a good chance for me to make a little money and look out for a rainy day by means of my own profession, in Washington. I propose trying it. The United States Supreme

Court and the Court of Claims will have a great deal of work for the next few years, of a kind to be very remunerative and to bring out one's faculty, if he has any. . . .

I can wind up my work as governor this year. A new man can undertake it then safely. I can go out and not seem to any one to have a disposition (which in truth I have not) to "lag superfluous on the stage;" and can, perhaps, be of quite as much use in the end to everybody else, and, certainly, of more use to my family. . . .

I cannot feel happy at the thought of going back to our own bar, after having for five years administered the Executive Government of the Commonwealth. I don't think it exactly consistent with respectability to do so; not for myself, but for the Commonwealth. And, especially, since my duties have been so peculiar, both in kind and variety, compelling me to make appointments, decide questions, veto, or propose and carry, measures, beyond all precedent in the past; I shall be hereafter more exposed to criticism and observation accordingly. This remark, however, I make, not to defend, but only to confess a feeling, which, if need be, I can, and I would, disregard and overcome. Now, what do you think of my plan? Perhaps it is too bold. But I hope not.

P. S. Just received your letters on "finance" and on "coast defenses." Will try to write in reply to-night; many thanks.

To this my father replied, opposing the plan, and adding: "I would like to see you leading the bar of Massachusetts, and coming here only when you have special cases. The spectacle of a man leading the war as you have done, — fairly leading the nation when old Abe has lagged and drifted along with the current you have made, — such a man going back from the highest place, to work at his profession at home, is my ideal of respectability and dignity, — yes, grandeur. I have often compared your modest house and hard-working habits with the attempts at show and high living which so many of our public men mistake for dignity, and now my wish would be to see the same common sense and manliness carried back into private life. . . .

"I should like to see Massachusetts people, by a spontaneous movement, put into trustees' hands for your wife and children something like the sum you have given to the public for five years past by working on a low salary instead of at your profession; but whether this will come about in a manner that would suit you, I cannot yet judge."¹

In public affairs event was following event in rapid succession. Late in February came Sherman's taking of Charleston; and after that Lincoln's second inauguration with the address which made him revered throughout the nation. My father was at the centre of the excitement of it all, but found

¹ This project was carried out, after the governor's death, by my father and others. — Ed.

time for some excursions from Washington. The pleasantest of these appears to have been one with Mr. Fox down the Potomac, giving him a view of a sham attack on Fort Monroe, as a rehearsal of what was afterwards done at Fort Fisher. After this sight he "passed two or three days of great enjoyment" at Point Lookout with his daughter and her husband, Colonel Russell, in their "little hut about sixteen feet square." Colonel Russell was in charge of a camp of rebel prisoners. Of them my father writes : —

"These men on the whole gave a very favorable idea of the Southern soldier ; they had not the education of our New England men, but were superior to the men drawn by the bounties from the city roughs and other such reserves, and I am inclined to think that the average was made up of young farmers with quite a sprinkling of well-educated men, and on the whole was nearly as civilized as our own."

"Just before the actual capture of Richmond," as my father writes in his notes, he "felt that the war was practically over," and accepted an invitation to himself and my eldest sister to visit Havana and Matanzas, on board the sloop of war *Santiago de Cuba*, "one of the fastest and most successful of the blockading squadron." They left Baltimore, where the steamer had been lying, about the end of March, had a much enjoyed trip to Cuba, and on their return arrived at Charleston just in time for

the raising of the old flag on Fort Sumter on the 14th of April. There they heard of Lee's surrender. Leaving directly after the ceremony, they were met, two days afterwards, at the "Capes of the Chesapeake" with the news that the President had been murdered on the night of the fourteenth. Of all this my father wrote soon afterwards to Monsieur de Beaumont. First apologizing for having neglected to answer some letter of his, on account of the press of public business, he goes on as follows, so far as can be made out from a very bad press copy : —

"We just arrived at Fort Sumter in time to see the old flag raised by General Anderson, on the spot where, four years before, the hands of the slave power had caused it to be lowered. . . . The platform crowded by abolitionists and warriors, the approach to the fort guarded by black soldiers lately slaves, the ruined fort around us ; and then to see the same old flag raised amidst salvos of artillery from the very guns which had assailed it, and the peaceful *réecho* from the battlements and from the fleet !

"You will, I know, forgive me for recalling these scenes in partial explanation of my neglect. It will be a sad anniversary, for though the morning gave us, there, the news of Lee's surrender, the night of the 14th April saw the murder of our President."

To this letter M. de Beaumont replies, writing in French from "*Beaumont par la Chartre*," June, 1865 : —

“I have read with extreme pleasure all the details you give me of the circumstances which accompanied the reëstablishment of your glorious flag on Fort Sumter. I assure you that by the account you have given me, I seemed to be present at that solemn scene. I thought I heard the cries of enthusiasm which saluted the triumph of the Federal Union and of human liberty, and my heart beat in unison with yours with joy and pride ; yes, I was at once proud and happy at this magnificent success of the liberal cause. . . . Thanks to God, and thanks to the heroic virtues on which I counted and which have not failed you, I have seen you triumph ! And it is for me, I assure you, a great joy to have lived long enough to see the destruction of the slavery of the blacks, and the reëstablishment of American liberty.”

M. de Beaumont then goes fully into the dangers to be encountered by the reunited States, and urges especially clemency towards the late rebels, the extent and spontaneity of which he, in common with nearly all other foreigners, failed to foresee. He ends thus : “I shall be very happy, sir, if, independently of little private affairs about which you have had the goodness to write to me, and to which you have given your benevolent care, you are still good enough to continue to speak to me sometimes of the general affairs of your country, and of the great American interests which have become more and more dear to the civilized world.”

Before this letter was written, we were coming to

the end of our stay in Washington. Of this my father writes : —

“The great event of our last days in Washington was the grand review of the armies of Sherman and Grant, which must have taken place early in May, and in which I had the chance to take a hand. When the preparations for it were going on, I found that it was planned to have only a very small grand stand for the President and the government officers, right in front of the White House; and it occurred to me that with plenty of room on each side, it would be a good thing to have seats for the convalescents of the army who were well enough to be out, there being at that time a very large number in the hospitals around Washington. So I went to General Augur and proposed it, he being then in command of the city. There were all sorts of difficulties; no money; no time; no orders for anything more. It was Saturday afternoon and the review was to begin Monday morning, but I would not ‘take no for an answer,’ and proposed to the general to give me an order for the ground on each side of the grand stand, to which he with much promptness acceded, and I at once got hold of the carpenter who had made the changes in my hired house, and before Monday morning he had platforms and benches for about 1500 sitters. Only a part of these could be filled by the convalescents, but they proved very useful, for no provision had been made for navy officers and many others who ought to have been thought of. I had what tickets

I wanted for myself and friends, and had the opportunity to oblige a great many from the North who crowded into Washington for the spectacle, among whom I remember Professor Benjamin Peirce of Cambridge. My seats were next to the grand stand, so that we saw everything to great advantage."

Then follows a description of the two days of the grand review which, as they belong to history, I omit, except the following part of it: "On one of my excursions along the line of search, I saw a very pretty incident. As a division was approaching led by General Merritt, a little mulatto girl came out from the sidewalk with a wreath of flowers. The crowd at first hooted at her, but the general stopped his horse and with great politeness and grace received the wreath and adjusted it on his pommel, thanking her very nicely for her gift, which turned the current of popular feeling, and elicited a shout of approbation."

He winds up his account of our life in Washington thus: "I think we were packed up and bound home within a day or two [after the review], owing to the hot weather of the early May. So the grand march past marks the end of our winter in Washington, and to us the end of the war; for William, of course, resigned his commission, and in due course was married the next fall."

"Reconstruction" is the word with which my father heads the next part of his notes. It begins thus: —

“The war was over, but the work of reconstruction was one of infinite difficulty, including the return of the rebel States with colored voters, resumption of specie payment, and of all the machinery of a state of peace. It ought to have included a reduction of the revenue by abolishing the war taxes, both foreign and domestic, but many complications were involved which either demanded or gave excuse for delay, until the manufacturers and home producers of lumber and minerals, following their real or supposed interests, became banded together against any reduction; while the liquor dealers, always a formidable element, allied themselves largely with the protectionists for the abolition of the internal revenue tax on liquors.”

As will be seen later on, it was the growth (when there ought to have been mitigation) of these war taxes on foreign goods, almost as much as the corruption caused by years of uninterrupted power, which, in 1884, compelled him to leave the Republican party and hold himself till the end of his life an independent in politics. But as yet he was heart and soul with his party, and all the time which he could devote to public affairs for the next few years was to be given to the questions: 1st. How to deal with the freedmen, lately slaves, and with the States of which they were now citizens; 2d. The settlement of the claims against Great Britain for damages by the Alabama and other vessels let out from her ports; and 3d. The finances of the country. In the last mentioned subject, as

being that with which he was most familiar, we find him for some time absorbed. His press-copy letter-book of this date is not to be found, so I have only a great bundle of Mr. McCulloch's replies to his letters during 1865. From these, for the reason already given, I shall make but one or two short extracts. But I first give part of a letter written by my father at this time to Mr. Beckwith, formerly a partner, in China, of Russell & Co., but now, as will have been seen, settled in Paris; and his constant correspondent on public matters: —

J. M. FORBES TO N. M. BECKWITH.

BOSTON, *June 25, 1865.*

Nothing from you for some time past, and I have hardly written you anything since I came home.

As to politics, the worst feature is the apparent haste for reconstruction. We can only hope that it is Johnson's plan to consider his present operations experimental, hold the war grip, and reject all terms unless they are consistent with our safety and honor. To give back the loyal blacks to the tender mercies of the planters without the protection of the ballot is equally mean and stupid. I hope you will read the account of our Faneuil Hall meeting, and will like, as I do, Dana's ground that the war will not be over until we have *secured* the safety for which we fought. We are trying to form an association to mould public opinion, against the meeting of Congress. Perhaps you will like to be one; and besides contributing your ideas, send us from \$50

to \$500, towards the diffusion of sound political information. Perhaps we shall do it through the Loyal Pub.; perhaps in various other ways. The L. P. has been, we think, a great success, reaching about a million of readers a week.

We have also started a new weekly in New York, "The Nation," under Godkin, into which I have put some money as a proprietor, and to which you ought to subscribe. I will send you the first number. Then we are going to establish a free press in Delaware, under Nordhoff, now working editor of the "Evening Post," in the hope of saving to freedom the two senators from that little half-alive nest of slavery. We are trying to do this without getting into an attitude of opposition to the President.

So much for politics: now for finance: [Here follow long estimates of public assets and liabilities, and a case stated for his correspondent's opinion, of how to make both ends meet and reduce paper currency. After which he goes on:] Meantime the issue of certificates alarms the public as to the emptiness of the treasury, and the reports of large orders for foreign goods tend to panic about gold, and counterbalance the benefit of free cotton, and of the much larger estimates now prevailing of the supply in the Southern States; which have in a month risen from 1,600,000 bales as the total supply for 1865 from the South, to 3,000,000 bales; and under these influences gold keeps at over 140. . . .

This letter appears to have crossed one from Mr. Beckwith on Treasury matters, which was sent on to Washington by my father and returned to him by Mr. McCulloch, with the following :—

H. McCULLOCH TO J. M. FORBES.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, *July 18, 1865.*

Your favors of the 12th and 14th inst. are received.

. . . I forward Mr. Beckwith's letter under date of June 29. . . . He writes forcibly and intelligently, and his suggestions are entitled to great weight.

We may all ask, I think, with Mr. Beckwith, "what financial blatherumskyte has got into the 'Evening Post'?" If you have any personal regard for Mr. Bryant, do induce him to prevent Mr. — (or Mr. Somebody-else) from writing upon subjects that he knows nothing about.

I am exceedingly pressed now with all sorts of business, and have no time to write you at length. Do not let this, however, prevent me from hearing often from you.

My father accordingly wrote to Mr. Bryant on the 24th of July, upholding the course which Mr. McCulloch had taken in reserving the government's right to "pay gold interest at 6 per cent. instead of 7.30 per cent. in currency," showing the success of his last loan in spite of very adverse circumstances, and appealing to the "usual fairness" of the "Post" for a reconsideration of its position

with regard to these matters ; he concluded his letter thus : —

“ While I thus ask your support for the secretary, there is one abuse which is well worthy the investigation and criticism of the ‘Post.’ When a government only pays its debts in promises, the least it can do is to give those promises promptly. The delays of disbursing officers have been, and are, notorious ; they make it impossible for any merchant to sell, or contract to government, without a large addition to the price, for the loss of interest and often loss of credit which they involve.

“ If, after making fair allowance for the necessary reorganization which a new incumbent must have time to make, Mr. McCulloch is responsible for these delays, you will do him, and the public, good by criticising him on this point.

“ He certainly will have reason to thank you, if you can point out the parties who are responsible, whether they are subordinates in his department, or in those of the army and navy ; for it will stop not only a great leak in the Treasury, but a great discredit to government and great suffering to individuals. I know that such delays exist to a mischievous extent ; but I do not believe that the Treasury is responsible for them. Let them be rooted out, whoever gets hit.”

On July 28, Mr. McCulloch writes : —

“ I *must* have an interview with you before the preparation of my report, as I have much more confidence in your sound practical views than I have

in the theories of those who have made finance a study."

I will not quote more from his letters ; but will merely say that extending, as they do, from this date into the year 1868, they seek, and express great obligations for, "financial counsel" on every kind of measure proposed by the Treasury, and ask for help with "some members who would be likely to be influenced" by his correspondent's opinion.

Meanwhile, the friends in France and England, who had been so staunch in holding to the Union during its struggle for existence, did not take less interest in its reconstruction : —

GUSTAVE DE BEAUMONT TO J. M. FORBES.

(Translated.)

BEAUMONT PAR LA CHARTRE, SUR LE LOIRE.

(SARTHE) 17 August, 1865.

. . . I have been very grateful to you for sending me some extracts contained in your letter, and for the account given of the meeting at Faneuil Hall. . . .

It is, I think, the policy of Mr. Johnson to follow worthily that of Abraham Lincoln. You will understand that the death of the assassins of Lincoln was approved beforehand. What voice could be raised in favor of such vile rascals? Public opinion could not object to any punishment legally inflicted on them. But be assured that with regard to any purely political crime, however great, it cannot be prosecuted and punished without raising the greatest difficulties

and the most dangerous protests. It is on this account that I regret so much Jefferson Davis having fallen into your hands. It would have been a great piece of luck, especially for you, if he had escaped. Whatever part may have been played by individual treason in this huge insurrection, one cannot hide from one's self the fact that in the eye of public opinion the struggle has taken the character of a great war between two peoples ; and after the war one expects, not justice with its tribunals, but amnesty with its mercy and pardon. . . .

Then one asks one's self what you are going to do with your black population, which owes to you its freedom, and which is becoming your greatest embarrassment, and which, on account of its ignorance, its corruption, and its vices, will perhaps some day be very dangerous even for the Union. Justice and humanity called for its freedom ; it is to your eternal honor that you have accomplished this : but in what political position are you going to place it ? On this point you are masters, to do whatever you judge most suitable to the general interests of your country. For if morality and justice cannot recognize the right of slavery, the absolute enjoyment of all political rights is not a question of morality and justice. Placed as I am so far from the country where these great questions are agitated, I should not dare to have an opinion which might not have a solid basis. You appear to consider as not only necessary but equitable the giving of the right of suffrage to all the blacks, and the future itself of

the union of the Southern States with those of the North appears to you to turn on this question. I bow to an opinion so wise and clear as yours, founded on observation of facts of which you have been witness, and on knowledge of all elements of the question. And yet this solution troubles my mind. I can scarcely convince myself that men, gross, ignorant, and corrupt up to this point, can become useful co-citizens in a society and form of government which calls for the greatest political enlightenment. Perhaps this concession is expedient at the moment, but can you recall it when it is once an accomplished fact? And again, will the expedient succeed? We had in 1848 a terrible experience of the danger that there is in proclaiming certain absolute principles with a view to the utility of the moment. It is certain that if the members of the provisional government of 1848 proclaimed absolute universal suffrage (including soldiers, domestics, and all common laborers without exception), they did it with the idea that it was the only method of establishing the republic in France forever; and it is no less certain that it was the laborers, the peasants, and the soldiers, hirelings of all sorts, who by their votes destroyed the republic, which only had in its support the votes of 1,500,000 "censitaires."

I submit, my dear sir, for your consideration this fact, which is surely one of the most curious of contemporaneous history, and shows perhaps better than any other how little statesmen know what they are doing, and how little where they are drifting. To-

day in France every one, even the imperial government, which has benefited by universal suffrage, recognizes that it would be necessary to place some condition on the exercise of this right, even when already proclaimed. For example, while conceding the principle, to make its application dependent on the elector's knowing how to read and write, having an established domicile for a certain number of years, possessing some independent means, etc.

How thankful I shall be to you, my dear sir, if you will be so good as to continue to let me know your opinion on what passes in your country. For a long time to come, it will be on you that the attention of Europe will be fixed. You have shown the world what a country can do in which all the citizens are enlightened, and in which morality and religion accompany enlightenment. Your political difficulties frighten me, but your marvelous successes reassure me; and when I think of what you have done, I await with confidence the accomplishment of that which remains for you to do.

JOHN BRIGHT TO J. M. FORBES.

ROCHDALE, *September 22, 1865.*

. . . I am looking at the progress of reconstruction with great interest; the difficulties are considerable, and the negro question is a puzzle in a republican country. The President seems willing to try the system of unlimited confidence with the South, which may possibly succeed, and to which there would be little objection if the negro were

safe from his former masters. But, for the negro, I fear state rights may be reëstablished too rapidly.

I say nothing in public on these your internal questions, for I am anxious to do no harm, and I have faith that you will find out what is best. I think your advice in favor of delay is wise, and must meet the general approval of the people.

There has been much talk of my coming to see you, but I seem as if I cannot leave home this autumn.

GOLDWIN SMITH TO J. M. FORBES.

MORTIMER, READING, *December 17, 1865.*

. . . All that you say about the Alabama case is only too true : and it is felt to be true by people of sense and high position before whom I have brought your views. Our government ought to have been only too happy to submit to arbitration : especially as your magnanimous and wise disarmament (the most truly magnanimous and the wisest thing in history) removed from your claim the slightest appearance of intimidation. It was worth to us not two but ten millions to get the law solemnly settled against the offense. It would have been a noble thing, too, and most beneficial to commerce and humanity, to see two great nations, under no pressure of fear, but from a free sense of justice, referring to arbitration a question of right which barbarism would settle by force. But, you see, gray hairs do not always bring wisdom : and wisdom does not always guide the councils of this old world. You

have done all you could, personally, at all events, to avert the evil with which it is to be feared this question is pregnant for the future. . . .

I suppose it is treason to say it, but I wish, if our government says anything to yours on the subject of Fenianism, your government would courteously point out that Fenianism has its source not in America but in Ireland, and make at the same time a few remarks on the state of barbarism in which the Irish are thrown upon your hands. . . .

I have just been talking to a friend of mine, who has been sent over by our government to inspect your schools, with a view to the improvement of ours. His account of them to me is not flattering, and the documents which he has brought with him seem to prove, to my surprise, that your masters and mistresses are very much underpaid. . . .

I long to see America again, but my hopes of doing so grow fainter.

My kindest regards to your family. Often do I think of the pleasant days I passed at Naushon.

In the autumn of 1865 came the marriage of my brother William, at Concord, to Edith, the daughter of Mr. Emerson. Among my father's notes of this period I find the following account of an adventure that almost kept him and my brother Malcolm away from that most interesting family occasion : —

“ We had planned a ducking expedition to the St. Clair River which we did not like to lose; so measuring our time carefully and loaded down with

guns and ammunition, we started off for the West about a week before the wedding. At Detroit we made arrangements with our old friend, Captain E. B. Ward, to have his boat, the Reindeer, stop for us on her way down from the upper lakes, at a ducking point which we expected to make our headquarters, but which was not one of the usual stopping places. I cannot here recount the myriads of ducks and geese which fell before our unerring guns, but we had a pleasant time paddling round among the lagoons and wild rice fields, and at last packed up and got all ready for the approaching steamer on a certain Saturday morning. We were on the wharf waiting for her, but instead of stopping she shot gayly by, paying no attention whatever to our signals. We, of course, gave up all hope of reaching home on time, but just at this moment a tug appeared in sight, coming down the river with a long tow of vessels astern. Knowing the obliging disposition of our Western friends, we left our cumbrous baggage, and with our lighter things jumped into a skiff and made signals to the tug to take us on board, which with some difficulty was accomplished, and the captain promised that, if nothing happened to prevent, he could still land us at Detroit in time for the afternoon train or boat, which would bring us home in season. It was, however, blowing a gale of wind, and in passing one of the shoals at the entrance to Lake St. Clair, our tow grounded, and we gave up hope once more. While struggling to get under way again, the captain of the tug

called out, 'There's the Reindeer coming back!' and sure enough we soon made out Captain Ward's steamer heading for us. We made all sorts of wild shrieks and whistles to let her know that we were on board the tug, from which finally, at some risk, we got on to her decks and sped away for Detroit.

"It appeared that the Reindeer had changed captains on the voyage, and the old one had forgotten to give orders to his successor to stop for us; but when Captain Ward, expecting to meet us on the wharf at Detroit, found that she had passed by our point without stopping, he landed his passengers who were bound to Ohio at once, and ordered the boat to go back for us. This is a good specimen of Captain Ward's method of doing business. We reached in good season the train which brought us home just in time for the wedding at Concord on Monday."

CHAPTER XIX

AFTER THE WAR

IN his notes, my father recalls no event of public interest between the end of 1865 and the beginning of 1868 ; but though, after the feverish excitement of the war, this may have been a period of comparative calm, his correspondence does not indicate much relaxation. There are letters from De Beaumont, thanking him for keeping him posted as to the different stages of reconstruction, and regretting that he was not young enough to be its historian ; from Henry Wilson, Mr. Sumner's co-senator for Massachusetts, asking to be "favored with an expression of [his] views on taxation of United States bonds ;" from Mr. Dudley, the indefatigable consul at Liverpool, telling him, with glee, of his having disposed of the Sumter, Tallahassee, and other Confederate "pirates," on account of the United States government ; and from his old correspondent in St. Louis, Rev. Dr. W. G. Eliot, president of Washington University, fearing President Johnson's influence in Missouri, asking for help in that "important crisis," and adding, a little doubtfully, "whether this comes in your range or not I do not know : but almost everything *does* !"

Mr. Samuel Hooper, one of the representatives from Massachusetts, writes : " You must take upon yourself some of the responsibility for the postponement of the tariff bill in the Senate. Your remark that the high rates in the tariff bill would split the party and pave the way for a reaction against the manufacturers influenced the Massachusetts senators to vote for postponing." And Mr. Sedgwick, whose hand one always rejoices to see among the files of letters, after upbraiding him for abandoning Washington to returned rebels, adds in his quaint, semi-pessimistic manner, " If you have any present views upon public affairs which are at all encouraging, let me have them. I have a sort of indistinct and dim faith in Providence, and hope that all will end well ; but the grounds of it are weak."

It will have been seen how steadily my father fought against the application of the term " democracy " to one particular party in our republic. We find him now making a new use of this doctrine, in his efforts to persuade the old Abolitionists to follow the example of Mr. Garrison, in adopting a new course.

WENDELL PHILLIPS TO J. M. FORBES.

BOSTON, *February 5, 1866.*

I well know, from what you have said to me and others, how carefully you read and how highly you value the " Anti-Slavery Standard." Accordingly, I took the liberty of sending you the Ladies' Circular, calling on its friends for funds to continue it.

Not hearing from you, you must pardon me if I trouble you too much in asking whether you find yourself unable to give us anything towards its support.

J. M. FORBES TO WENDELL PHILLIPS.

BOSTON, *February 6, 1866.*

I meant to have accepted your invitation to the festival, but was absent in New York (supposed to be) privateering.¹

I have received your debates, and must say I think the weight of argument is against keeping up the anti-slavery name; and yet I value the "Standard," while differing from it; so I, with some doubt, try it again another year with my little contribution inclosed, which please do not publish. It is a trick the "Standard" has, which I always considered in bad taste. I wish you had changed the name into the "Democratic Standard" or the "Standard of the Democracy." . . .

Now do not think I am so presumptuous as to affect to chain down your brightness to commonplace expediency, but I must for my own comfort say out my thought, which is, with you, that real democracy is broader than mere anti-slavery. If you could only become the apostle of democracy, I am sure you would do the negro more good than any other way.

I do not pretend to be philanthropic, or to love

¹ Referring to his vessel, the *Meteor*, an account of which will be found later in this chapter. — Ed.

the negro, and still less the Irishman, or the Englishman (I only mention it because I think I represent the commonplace man who does the voting), but I have a thorough-going, hearty belief in the expediency and justice and necessity of equal rights, and a thorough disgust at anything like aristocratic or class badges. We have all been at times beshadowed by various issues, by Whiggery, and sham conservatism, and by tariffs and compromises; and our people are to this day so bejuggled by a name that what they want, in my judgment, more than anything else, to secure equal rights is a party like your own anti-slavery party, never expecting office, but determined to push onward and upward the idea of a true democracy.

Nobody can lead such a party as you can. You have always preached it; but as subsidiary to the slavery question. Has not the time come when you can make this the grand motor, and let the negro take his chance, or rather his shelter, under the broader principle of the rights of man?

For my own part I feel dissatisfied with all parties (yours among the rest); some for one reason, some for another; and I can do nothing with hearty satisfaction until we get upon a broader basis than any of them now stand upon. While we were fighting I felt sure, like the Irishman at the Donnybrook Fair, that hard hitting was the right thing; but now I feel like lying by, and waiting for something that I can support in earnest.

Early in 1866 Mr. Fox, still Assistant Secretary of the Navy, was sent by the United States government, in a monitor, to Russia, to offer to the Czar our country's congratulations on the freeing of the serfs. When this was in contemplation, it occurred to my father that a slightly different touch might be given to the proceedings by some verses "with a good ring to them;" and accordingly, at his suggestion, his kind friend, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, wrote for this occasion the ode beginning:—

"Though watery deserts hold apart
The worlds of East and West."

Mr. Fox, after crossing the ocean successfully in the small monitor (to the surprise of some of his friends, who feared her voyage would end at the bottom of the ocean rather than at Cronstadt), arrived duly in Russia; the poem was read to the Czar and translated by the court poet, and was a great success.

The account of the affair was transmitted by Mr. Fox to my father and forwarded to Dr. Holmes, who writes in reply:—

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES TO J. M. FORBES.

164 CHARLES STREET, BOSTON, *September 8, 1866.*

I thank you heartily for your attention and your pleasant words. I am naturally gratified that the small efforts I made to oblige my friends—yourself and your friend, perhaps I ought to say—should have served the purpose so well. I beg you

will thank Mr. Fox for me when you next write, and assure him of the great pleasure his most polite and agreeable note afforded me.

About this time my father had one very annoying experience, viz. : the detention of the steamship *Meteor* by the United States government, at the instance of the Spanish minister, whose government was now at war with that of Chile. That official had received intelligence of the "evil intentions" of the owners of the *Meteor*, from New York informers, eager for their share of the spoil in the event of condemnation.

She had been built, as has been said, by a number of patriotic men as a cruiser fast enough to capture the *Alabama* and other privateers. The rapid collapse of the rebellion, however, left her on her owners' hands, no longer needed in the service of their own government. They consulted international lawyers of eminence and found that she could legally be sent, unarmed, to a neutral port, for sale there to any party, at peace or war, who wanted her. Fortified by this opinion, she was just fitting out for Panama, when she was accused, as before mentioned, of being about to break the United States neutrality laws, and held in dock.

As a matter of fact, before the news of the war between Chile and Spain had reached America, the Chilean consul had looked over the vessel and made an attempt to buy her ; but he offered too low a price, and the negotiation had been dropped.

Unhappily for her owners, the Alabama claims were just coming to the front, and the government were most eager to show how much more strictly we could interpret our laws than the English did theirs, and how much more promptly we could enforce them. The poor Meteor was a convenient object lesson. She was detained, at great loss to her owners, and much worry and perturbation to my father, who had, he felt, more or less led his brother and friends into the scrape. After endless expense and law suits, a final verdict was given against the United States government, which accordingly had to pay damages for her detention. The amount thus paid by no means made up for the loss; but so ended this episode. A lively account of the whole affair will be found in my uncle's "Reminiscences."¹

My father had a number of copies of the arguments in the case printed, and one of them was sent to Mr. Adams. In acknowledging the receipt of it, he wrote as follows:—

C. F. ADAMS TO J. M. FORBES.

57 MT. VERNON STREET, BOSTON, 4 February, 1869.

I have to thank you for a copy of your law work, which I shall examine with great interest. It always seemed to me a little singular that, after all your devotion to the support of the government on the ocean during the war, you should be the one

¹ Page 271. *Personal Reminiscences*. By Robert B. Forbes. Second edition, revised. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1882.

selected to be a scapegoat for the offenses of the Alabama, at its close. But thus goes the world in too many cases. . . .

I have spoken repeatedly of the deep respect my father had felt for Governor Andrew. His death, due to overwork in the war time, came on the 30th of October, 1867. I give his last letter to my father:—

JOHN A. ANDREW TO J. M. FORBES.

BOSTON, *October 4, 1867.*

MY DEAR MR. FORBES,— Although I sent word to Major Rogers to reply for me to your invitation to the hunt, I think a brief line is due in my own hand.

I have been very lazy this week in consequence of being unwell, and even the grasshoppers have been a burden.

But *next* week I am mortgaged deep with engagements, which have heaped up, instead of scattering.

Besides, I imagine I should make a far worse hunter than your countryman Fergus McIvor found Edward Waverley to be, when Captain Waverley joined in the deer hunt with the Scotch Jacobites.

For all that, I would surely visit Naushon, if I could. I should find there my own pleasure; while the other followers of Vich Ian Vohr might, each for his “nain-sel,” not only kill a deer, but swallow him, horns and all, without exciting the calm repose

which your beautiful island and waters would shed
over the soul of respectfully and faithfully,

Your friend and servant,

JOHN A. ANDREW.

Soon after the governor's death there came a letter from my father's respected friend, Mr. Martin Brimmer, which expresses the feelings of the community at large towards this simple, great-hearted man. An extract from this reads as follows:—

“I have a strong feeling of the obligation we are under in Massachusetts to Andrew. At the same time I esteemed the man himself more highly than any service he ever rendered. He was almost the only public man I ever knew who combined thorough independence and disregard of self with a great power of leading and determining public opinion. No man believed in the people more, or truckled to them less, than he. He was the foremost man in New England, on the whole, I think. In a few years he might have been the foremost man in the country. As you say, we cannot begin to fill his place.”

During this period, the anger in the North, caused by President Johnson's Southern policy, was growing apace, and culminated in his impeachment and trial by the Senate. Mr. Fessenden and Mr. Grimes, on this occasion, broke from their party and voted against the impeachment. In consequence of this vote a storm of abuse fell on the heads of these senators, which deeply irritated my

father, who fully respected their independence, although he differed from them. He took the occasion to invite Mr. Grimes to his house, and wrote to Mr. Fessenden a letter which I give in full, with extracts from the answer : —

J. M. FORBES TO W. P. FESSENDEN.

Boston, *May* 23, 1868.

I am the owner of a portrait of your son which I found in Brackett's studio, and which struck me favorably as a picture. Mr. Brackett tells me you saw it and appeared to like it.

If it is a good portrait, the only proper place for it is in your house, and I shall in that case esteem it a great favor if you will allow me to send it to you, either to Washington or Portland.

If you would not value it I shall either keep it as a companion piece to that of my dear young friend Colonel Charles Lowell, or find a place for it in some gallery where the public can see it ; but if it will be any pleasure to you it would be most gratifying to me to think of it in your possession.

All true hearts love the memory of the young soldiers who have so nobly given their lives for us !

P. S. I hope you do not care anything for the ravings of our radical papers ; and I know you will not let them move you a hair from the even tenor of your way. The more I agree with them, in the main, the more they make me mad with their extravagance and unreasonableness.

Nobody feels more deeply than I do the misfor-

tune of seeing impeachment fail; but it is sheer madness to add to this great disaster the risk of splitting up the Republican party, now the only bulwark of freedom. We owe it to the living and to the dead to keep together until we have absolutely secured the fruits of our dearly bought victories. After that, party becomes comparatively unimportant.

W. P. FESSENDEN TO J. M. FORBES.

WASHINGTON, *June 21, 1868.*

MY DEAR SIR, — I have no doubt the picture is a very good portrait. My son William admires it very much, and upon reflection, perhaps it may be as well sent to me at Portland. I consider it your gift to me, wherever it may be, and I accept it from you with pleasure. . . .

A word or two upon the subject of your postscript. I have, of course, felt very much outraged by the gross attacks which have been made upon me by some of our Republican journals. . . . From whatever feeling they may have originated, however, I cannot but feel that time will set all things even. Whether it does or not, the path of duty is plain. No considerations of this sort could justify me in abandoning my principles, or departing from my line of duty. Long-continued injustice will of course shake any man's party attachments, and blunt his interest in public affairs; but it ought not to lead him astray from the path of rectitude and honor. I hope to be preserved from anything which will give pain to my friends, or diminish my own

self-respect. A man who has knowingly and deliberately put at hazard all that most public men value, in obedience to his sense of right, will not be likely to throw away all the consolation that remains to him, — his own approval.

Grimes will be in Boston before long, and I hope our friends will see and cheer him. His temperament is more excitable and delicate than one would suppose, and I think the struggle has affected him. He is a noble fellow, and I love him more than ever.

I am sorry to say that I find no more letters from Senator Fessenden, whose death took place in September, 1869.

About the beginning of 1868 came Mr. Seward's retirement from office. I have preserved, in an appendix,¹ the opinion then held by my father as to his management of our foreign affairs, an opinion which he never modified in after years. It illustrates my father's views on important points in our public policy during the war, and I cannot persuade myself wholly to omit it; but it would delay the narrative too much if I were to insert it here.

I find no special mention in my father's notes of the first election of General Grant to the presidency in 1868; but among his papers of that period a constant fire was kept up on the subject of the Alabama claims till the time of their being settled

¹ Apparently an article written for one of the New York papers. See Appendix B, p. 240. — ED.

by the Geneva arbitrators. As to this, referring to the opposition of Sumner and others, he says : " We had become at this time so confident in our strength that it took some courage to meet Sumner's opposition to the negotiation which led to the Geneva Convention ; but General Grant was equal to the occasion, and I had the opportunity to do what little I could to support his views, when the subject was under consideration in the cabinet, but had not reached the public."

During the controversy which preceded the arbitration, most of his English friends had come to consider the claims urged by the United States government as excessive. He contended, on the other hand, that from their point of view, more than any other, they could not be too liberally treated. All this has long since passed into history ; and so I give only a specimen, in a letter which he wrote to his friend, Mrs. N. J. Senior, on the 18th of April, 1872. After referring to some bit of private business, he goes on to say : —

The treaty is a good one, and will take care of itself and come out all right. All this bother about it reminds me of the Chinese edicts for sending out a fleet of bamboo baskets, called junks, "*with thundering guns to drive off the foreign barbarians.*" Much powder would then be expended, and the national honor being noisily vindicated, things (no foreign barbarian being seen alive) would in due course settle down to their ordinary course. . . .

Our lawyers' argument for full, or even exemplary, damages, based upon the hasty declaration of belligerency, and upon Lord Russell's Chinese tight shutting of the eyes to the Alabama's outfit, is an admissible one, even if overstrained; and, if such an absurd fuss had not been made about it, might possibly have given us a few pounds sterling more than we should otherwise have got; and now, the pother will simply induce the Geneva arbitrators to give us still more, in a lump verdict, which will promptly settle the whole matter and restore amicable relations much sooner than a long and hotly contested attempt to settle damages in detail; and the more Uncle J. B. coolly considers it, the more he will be pleased with this result then. Madam, I see I have made your eyes open as wide as I did your good father-in-law's, in 1863, when I told him that the time would come when his government would be glad to pay for the Alabama's burnings in order to cancel her bad precedents. I wonder if he ever recorded my talks with him! Now, to-day, and for months back, all England, except Lord John and a few disappointed politicians, would have applauded a settlement which *merely* paid for the Alabama's burnings!

To look one step ahead, what earthly good will it do J. B., a chronic belligerent on the sea, to have the damages limited to direct damages for gross negligence in letting a steamer escape? On our extensive coasts, Atlantic and Pacific, no vigilance can prevent swarms of vessels escaping our officials the

next time you go to war. Your safety requires that the neutrals shall hold all such vessels responsible for their evasion of neutral laws, and shall pay exemplary damages if they fail to do so. Then our buccaneers, who are just as bad as your Liverpool fellows, will not dare to send their vessels to sea ; for they cannot get coal or shelter without being overhauled for their previous sins.

If I were an Englishman I would insist upon the Geneva conference making you pay smartly for the doings of all the cruisers who, by the mere hoisting of a flag and opening a commission at sea, were allowed to become purged of their crimes against your government, and were welcomed with all the honors, and supplied openly with coal, and secretly with men and arms. They would never have been sent to sea, and never could have kept the sea long enough to do any serious mischief, if their rascally outfitters had not known that they would receive shelter and countenance after merely getting out.

So much for your side ; now for ours. We feel deeply our wrongs, and many here oppose the treaty as totally inadequate, and predict that not a tithe of the reasonably direct damage will ever reach our pockets. If it drags along and looks like resulting in totally inadequate pecuniary redress, it will leave a permanent grievance which our mob orators and our wild Irish voters will inflame, until it produces mischief ; and to leave things as they are is simply to have a match burning in a powder magazine.

Everything points to the expediency of a prompt and final settlement by a fixed award of arbitrators ; since you cannot, without disgust at your rulers, come down squarely from the untenable positions Lord Russell took, and pay voluntarily. Please record my prediction, and read my preface to Sumner's speech and my letters in the appendix which I will send you. No names to either printed. Forgive *me*, your enemy, and let politics go !

In three days I intend embarking in the *Rambler* for Fayal, there to pick up my Alice, to whom you were so kind ; and, after a cruise among the Azores, land wherever the wind will let us, in France or England ; join my son for a few days, perhaps, in Switzerland, and home by steam. My sister and a young lady accompany me, and will perhaps be the first lady yachters across the Atlantic. I shall call and see you if I reach London, and am

Very truly yours,

J. M. FORBES.

The excursion referred to in the concluding portion of this letter duly took place. I well recall the cold, bright April day when we all went down the harbor on the little vessel, — those of us not outward bound parting from her at the Boston light, and returning by the tow-boat. The *Rambler*, though large for a yacht, looked very small to us, while with a fair wind she sped out into "blue water," my father, aunt, and friend waving their handkerchiefs to us from her deck, the gulls wheeling around her, and the sun full on her white sails. The voyage

was very successful. They touched at Fayal and St. Michael's, and then, abandoning the plan of going to England, they sailed for Teneriffe, and so home. At Fayal lived at that time our friends the Dabneys. While there my father wrote to Mr. Hamilton Fish, then Secretary of State : —

J. M. FORBES TO HAMILTON FISH.

FAYAL, *8th June*, 1872.

You may perhaps have forgotten that two or three years ago I wrote you very earnestly recommending the retention of our late consul at this place, Charles W. Dabney. That excellent friend and good American has since died, leaving two sons, most worthy successors to his business and his popularity here. Everything which I then said about the importance of having a gentleman as our consul here, and especially one of strong American feeling, is more than confirmed by my observation upon the spot. The Portuguese attach great value to official position in such an isolated place as this, and look up to our consul with the same sort of respect which in large capitals attaches to an ambassador. I find here every one full of remembrance of the public-spirited acts of the Messrs. Dabney, from the day when they gave their ship, freight free, to transport a cargo of provisions contributed by Boston (through their influence) to the starving people here, down to the time when they bought up all the coal here to prevent the pirate Semmes getting his supplies for the Alabama. In short, the name of Dabney is in

every respect associated with good-will towards the inhabitants, and zeal for American interests. I now find that the new consul, Mr. Cover, is in such a state of health that his resignation is probable, and I would most urgently beg, upon public as well as personal grounds, that if a vacancy occurs you will give full consideration to the many reasons which exist for appointing one of the Messrs. Dabney. They are both gentlemen of mature age, good education, unspotted integrity, and in every way calculated to do honor to the office. The salary is only \$750, and to merely political aspirants the office is unimportant, while to an American merchant permanently residing here, it is desirable. During the years in which I have been identified with the Republican party by some work and certainly much zeal, I have never before solicited anything for myself. I now venture to ask of the administration, as a personal favor, that my wishes, backed by direct knowledge of the parties and of the circumstances, may have weight in the appointment of the consul here.¹

The next extract is from a letter to me, from St. Michael's, and will amuse any who recollect my father's fondness for quick modes of locomotion.

RAMBLER, ST. MICHAEL'S.

Here we are, with sail up, tied to a buoy, and

Mr. Cover died on his voyage home from Fayal, and Mr. S. Dabney was appointed consul. — ED.

ready to let go the moment the passengers come on board for Fayal. We have had a delightful visit here, weather favoring us, and the yacht proving a most valuable home, besides transporting us and a large party back and forth.

I could not help thinking how your eyes would twinkle with enjoyment at seeing me bound hand and foot, and given over to the power of a donkey and his driver, perched upon a high pack with both feet on the same side. No bridle, no whip, nothing to do but submit and hold on, while turning sharp corners overhanging a precipice, or being goaded at an ass's double quick, into the midst of the party, who are all equally helpless!

Some of those heathen kings led captive into Rome might have conceived of my sensations. You cannot. And then, once down from the mountains, to be led through narrow streets of villages teeming with men, women, and children, all doubtless making fun of one, though happily their gibberish is generally unintelligible!

A donkey train of sixteen or eighteen, with the girls in red and blue, is very picturesque, zig-zagging along the mountain sides.

I have spoken of repeated journeys to California and Florida. It is impossible to give one tithe of the accounts which have been preserved of these various excursions. But I ought to mention that my father often added his friends to the family parties that were made up for these numerous expe-

ditions. It is to one of these plans, for a trip to the White Mountains in New Hampshire, that the following letter refers.

R. W. EMERSON TO J. M. FORBES.

CONCORD, *June 6, 1870.*

MY DEAR FRIEND, — Your letter delighted me and my dame to-night with its wit and its beneficent proposal, and I believe you cannot write a letter which shall not have both these elements. And the scheme is charming to me, the company and the mountains. And yet it is not to be thought of by me, — I wish it were. I have just come to the end of my Cambridge work, which has been so unusual a strain on my lawless ways of study, that I have been forced to postpone all duties, demands, proprieties, specially letters, to it, and now they will break my doors down if I do not face them. Please give me credit for rare honesty, nay, magnanimity, that I do not run out by the back door and take the train to you. If Ellen were here, or within reach of your invitation, it would be still harder to say no; but she has gone this morning, with Mr. Keyes and his family, to Amherst and Northampton; I suppose for a week. I hope the happiest weather and conditions to Mrs. Forbes and Alice, and I have the sorrow of a boy that I cannot go.

Yours affectionately,

R. W. EMERSON.

On another occasion, in the next year, my father succeeded in enticing Mr. Emerson away from his study and his beloved town of Concord, on a memorable journey across the continent.¹ In answer to an invitation to join this party, Mr. Emerson wrote as follows: —

R. W. EMERSON TO J. M. FORBES.

CONCORD, SUNDAY EVENING, 26 *March*, 1871.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — Your brave offer, which startled me yesterday, has kept my thoughts pretty steadily at work all to-day. And I am hardly ready to-night to decide. I have been postponing some serious tasks till my Cambridge work (which is a more serious strain than you would imagine) is ended, and to postpone these again, I fear seems to threaten the breaking of my contracts. One of these is to an English bookseller whom I have stopped from stealing old scattered articles of mine, by promising to furnish him an honest book, in November, I believe. And other work is to precede that, — which were long to tell. On the other side is the brilliant opportunity you offer me to see the wonderful country, and under every advantage, and with friends so dear and prized, and with yourself the leader. And I have the whisper that the adventure may add so much strength to body and mind as to compensate the shortened time on my return. Add that my wife and Ellen and Edward are unanimous in urging the journey.

¹ Already mentioned in chapter i. page 8.

The result is that at this moment I lean to your munificent proposal, and shall prepare to go with you; but I shall reserve, for a day or two yet, a right to reconsider the decision of this moment. Meantime I value dearly the great heart that makes the proposition.

R. W. EMERSON.

This journey, which included the Yosemite valley and Lake Tahoe, was successfully carried out, and enjoyed all the more by the rest of the party for the serene and dignified presence of Mr. Emerson. An episode in my father's next trip to Florida is mentioned in the following letter. It does not read like that of a man sixty years old, who had just recovered from a violent attack of lumbago.

MAGNOLIA, FLORIDA, *March 9, 1873.*

MY DEAR SARAH, — Just after I had been abusing you came your nice letter of February 26 from the Berkeley, where you seem to be having a peaceful time. Here we have little incident, the great struggle being to find time enough to do anything.

Three days ago I went with Will and Hemenway, by sailboat, to some splendid snipe grounds about eight miles down river. It was a beautiful day, and we found the loveliest snipe marsh in America, where two days before a party had killed 118 in four hours.

It took us till noon to beat down, and then we had a fine walk of three hours, getting only eight

birds, however, as the flight had gone by. I had the ill luck to step into a deep hole, and went into the water up to my waist ; then a tumble, heels over head, without breaking my gun or my neck ! then my india-rubber boot separated into two parts, and I had to walk back nearly barefoot !

One party down here got out of powder and shot and then met an enormous moccasin snake, which they dared not attack. Will saw an alligator. We got home at seven, pretty cold and stiff, but a good pine-wood fire and hot supper set us to rights, and I have no ill effects except a little lameness in the knee. The hole in my back made by Dr. Rogers's blister is nearly healed, and I am beginning to feel worth a little something. Yesterday I went to Jacksonville on business, and on my return found another horse sent up for me to try, a nice, compact pony, easy and gentle, and all right except a Roman nose.

To-day Hunt¹ and I took a long ride to try the new pony, which he pronounced first-rate ; then we went into the Emerald Spring and voted ourselves happy to get in there, and out of Boston. We are talking of a trip to St. Augustine with our guns, leaving mother here. . . . Hunt is delighted with the climate and the life here.

Always your affectionate, J. M. F.
Thermometer about 70.

In the political campaign of 1872, when Horace

¹ William Morris Hunt, the artist. — Ed.

Greeley, as the Democratic nominee for the presidency, was opposed to Grant's candidacy for a second term, my father was chosen one of the two Republican electors at large. Charles Sumner, strangely enough, was supporting Greeley. I have purposely omitted the notes of a journey taken by my father in 1867 over Sherman's route to the sea, as its chief results are given in the following letter to Mr. Sumner. The letter is long, but it seems to me too important to shorten.

J. M. FORBES TO CHARLES SUMNER.

NAUSHON, *August 10, 1872.*

MY DEAR MR. SUMNER, — I have re-read with great care the letter to the colored people you sent me, and really wish I could take your rose-colored view of the situation, for I should then feel tranquil, whichever party won. But I have actually seen something of the South, and I cannot but look with alarm upon the chance of your coalition succeeding, and I regret exceedingly that you could not have held yourself in reserve so as to throw your weight on the right side after the campaign develops more clearly the intentions of the Democracy.

Just after the war, I followed Sherman's march in reverse, going slowly from Savannah to Atlanta, Chattanooga, Nashville, Louisville; stopping with my family a few days at each important point, talking with Simms (colored editor), with Saxton, and finally with that fine old soldier, General Thomas. The Ku-Klux machinery was just coming into play,

and the Southern cities were decorated with its emblems, death's heads and cross-bones, daggers dripping blood, etc., etc. At Louisville, having a letter to the general, I discussed with him the meaning of this organization in a full and confidential manner, and Johnson's impeachment being then on the tapis, I wrote to some of our friends East the result, perhaps to you. General Thomas was convinced that the Ku-Klux was a far-reaching machine got up by the Southern leaders to perfect themselves, as far as they were allowed, into a Vigilance Committee, or, as they used to call it, into an army of regulators, to eventually control the Southern elections by intimidation and actual violence against the Union or Republican voters, white or black. Everything I have seen since in my visits South, including the whole of last winter, satisfies me that this view was, and is still, correct, and that if we give back to the rebel States what the Greeley party call "local self-government," it will simply mean the right to control the elections by fraud or violence, as either may promise to be most effective; and of course their next step would be to reorganize the whole social system, and reorganize labor.

Up to last spring I found the insane cry of the educated rebels just the same as it had been: "the blacks will not work;" "they rule the country so as to make it insufferable for the whites;" "their insolence is intolerable;" "their taxes are eating us up;" and so on to the end of the chapter. I wish you had been, by the mercy of Providence, induced

to take a run down and mix with the people yourself, instead of having to get your impressions of the South from politicians and newspapers. I do not forget what nuisances many of the carpet-baggers were, and are; but in the ignorance of the four millions about the machinery of voting, they were the schoolmasters in the caucus and town meetings, and the A B C teachers of free government; and though in many cases an evil, they were a necessary one, — unless we were to give over the government to the old slave leaders, and their less educated sons now coming forward, suckled as they were upon rebel milk, and taught to labor and to wait for the revival of the lost cause. . . . I have seen no signs at the South of a desire for reconciliation on the part of the old slave party. They have a strong desire to regain power, and by a united South and a Democratic North to again govern the country; but in my judgment the masses of that party are as bitter against the black voters, and against you black Republicans, as they ever were; and the only safe way is to keep them under by a united Republican North until the colored population are strong enough to protect themselves.

An old rebel colonel said to me in South Carolina, "The moment the federal government withdraws its interference, we shall fly at each other's throats, and the weakest will go under." The poor man was in favor of continued federal control, for he evidently thought it doubtful whether his gray-coated friends in that State could hold their own.

I agree that the time has got to come when the four millions must do without guardianship, and learn to take care of themselves; but with their still imperfect education, their general mildness, their habitual fear of the bowie-knife and revolver, I dread to see them put to the test yet. Give them, for a few years longer, the pen, and the press, and the habit of carrying arms, and of working for themselves, before you turn them out to the tender mercies of their old masters, under the plausible guise of "local self-government." Without going there you really cannot understand what children most of them are. With their instinct of owning land, they do not yet find their way to the public homesteads to any extent; and until they actually get land they will never be safe from something like peonage. The old slaveholders show their instinct, too, in discouraging by every possible means the breaking up of large estates and the acquisition of land by the blacks, whether from public or private domains. Many of the States have very large amounts of state lands, acquired under the Swamp Land swindle,¹ and otherwise, as in Texas, by the original act of annexation.

¹ The allusion is to the legislation of the United States by which "Swamps and overflowed lands" belonging to the national government were ceded to the States where they were situated. This began with a statute of March 2, 1849, making a cession to Louisiana. In September, 1850, a similar grant was made to Arkansas and "each of the other States;" and afterwards States subsequently admitted to the Union had the same grant made to them. Great frauds have been committed under these statutes, and they have been the cause of much litigation, and endless difficulty to the Land Department. See Donaldson's *Public Domain*, p. 217. — ED.

Now, as an old friend, I wish in all kindness to put myself on record as regretting your leaving our party, and as predicting that you will come back to us. I know you will pardon me for begging you, even at this late day, to maintain such a reserve in your speeches and other campaign work as to make it easy for you to strike a blow for the right side with the greatest effect, if in your judgment the occasion arises.

I have no doubt of Greeley's good intentions, but I consider them the very worst kind of pavement to depend on unless there is a good hard substratum underneath. Nobody knows better than you that where his kindness of heart, his fear of violence, or his prejudices and hobbies are concerned, Greeley can never be depended on in a pinch. He has always been flying from one extreme to the other; giving up the Union in March, 1861; then shouting, "On to Richmond;" and the worst of all, in 1864, when a compromise would have destroyed all we had so fearfully earned, doing his best to accomplish it. Now you are the very antipode of Greeley in firmness and tenacity of purpose. You may for a while act as balance-wheel, but with his Democratic millions at his back I have not the slightest hope that you can keep him out of the reactionary vortex (if he should be elected); and then, or earlier, when you see the old slave leaders, from Voorhees, and his Northern coadjutors, up to Wade Hampton and General Johnston, and perhaps Jeff Davis himself, preparing to take full possession

of the government (with Greeley for a helpless figure-head), I wish you may be in the best position to reclaim your old position among us with the least possible friction; for in such a case I know you will reclaim it, no matter what breaks.

With such opinions on the main question, it is not worth while to go into the smaller issues of how best to manage finance, currency, etc., etc.; and to get back from protection, which Greeley would (as far as his influence goes) make prohibitory, to something like sound revenue tariffs. On all these, Greeley will, however honest, be an experimental philosopher instead of a practical one. I don't object to novelties in a small way, but when the fate of millions is involved, I want steadiness and safety, and I am sure you will split with Greeley before you go very far.

Forgive me this frankness, which may even seem meddlesome, but you and I can still, I hope, talk plainly to each other; or rather you can let me speak out to you and disagree with you for a while without quarreling.

Yours very truly,

JOHN M. FORBES.

CHAPTER XX

RETIREMENT FROM POLITICS. — RAILROADS

DURING the second term of office which the gratitude of a nation to its military hero, and its wholesome dislike of feather-headed virtue, had given to General Grant, I find my father's public work, except occasional attacks on the growing political corruption in his party, to have been chiefly devoted to the currency question. He considered this question, as he says, one of "the most important, not only to commercial men, but to all the industrious men of the country." In December, 1873, he supported Mr. H. L. Pierce's bill "to provide for resumption of specie payments." The next month he appeared as a witness before the congressional committee on "Banks and Currency," and did his best to convince its members that the welfare of the country in such matters required above all things "the steadiest possible measure of values," and that the laboring man was the first victim of any tampering with that measure. Later on in the year (1874), he was able to use some influence with General Grant in favor of his veto of the "Inflation Bill." This veto, given by the President in the teeth of much opposition in the ranks



of his own party, my father considered as, "next to his military success, the crowning glory of Grant's life." In May he was rejoicing with his friend, Mr. J. S. Ropes, over this veto, and with him striving to "disabuse the minds of their Western friends" of the idea that more currency meant "a boon to the toiling millions!"

A flagrant instance, at this time, of the growing corruption in what is called machine politics, was the appointment to the collectorship of the port of Boston, of a man whose political career had shown him to be unfitted for the post. This appointment was urged by General Butler, then a Republican member of the national House of Representatives, and always, as my father held, one of the most mischievous influences, in war and in politics, with which Massachusetts had ever had to deal. To oppose the confirmation of this appointment, my father went to Washington as chairman of a committee of merchants; unsuccessfully, as it turned out, for, as he says in his notes, "like the horse jockey who had said a horse was seventeen feet high, instead of seventeen hands, and had stuck to it, General Grant was famous for persisting in any mistake which he made." I find the following letter written to the President, some time after this Boston appointment and other worse mistakes had ruined any chance of overcoming the very general prejudice against a presidential third term: —

J. M. FORBES TO PRESIDENT GRANT.

BOSTON, *September 27, 1876.*

When I called upon you in regard to the appointment of Simmons to the collectorship of Boston, I ventured to say that sooner or later you would find that Butler was the worst enemy of the Republican party. The inclosed telegrams, which some of the Democratic papers have dug out, prove conclusively that at that very time Butler was in close affiliation with the leaders of the Democratic party, and was using the alliance to get Simmons confirmed; their motive being to split the Republican party, which he gladly availed himself of for his selfish ends. The split came, and left him entirely out of sight until B. H. has again brought him to the surface; and now with the help of the federal officers whom he then got appointed, he has turned up a threatening nuisance, and is doing more harm to the party than any man alive.

We shall keep Massachusetts right side up,¹ in spite of him and Mr. —— both; but the mischief he is doing outside the State is incalculable. I cannot believe that he and the rebels will triumph; but he is doing all that one man can for them, and if they succeed there will be one consolation, — we shall get rid of him, and see him go back to them, where he belongs.

By the end of Grant's second administration, the

¹ In the contest for the presidency between Hayes, Republican, and Tilden, Democrat. — Ed.

need of civil service reform was apparent to all men of my father's stamp. "To the victors belong the spoils" had become the cry of the political bosses; and the evil it implied had been growing, from the war time onwards. As long ago as May, 1869, Charles Sumner, writing from the senate chamber, had said to him: "I did my best to prevent adjournment, . . . but senators and members were so anxious to escape this terrible pressure of office-seekers that I was powerless."

The notes continue: —

"My having been one of the two Massachusetts electors at large in the campaign of 1872, — which resulted in the reëlection of General Grant, — with other things, probably led to my being chosen, four years later, one of the delegates at large to the Cincinnati Republican National Convention, which nominated General Hayes, — instead of Bristow, as had been proposed.

"I had supported Grant through his second term, as I had already done through his first; but then (1876) took part in the Independent movement of which Massachusetts formed the nucleus. At Cincinnati, R. H. Dana, Judge Hoar, and perhaps President Seelye were with me as delegates at large, and were pushing for a nomination which would mean abolishing the rule of the machine bosses, then represented by Blaine and Conkling, who opposed each other, but were equally mischievous in their support of the discipline of the Republican party, and were entirely blind, or indifferent, to its

many abuses. It was a great gain to get so good a man as Hayes for the nominee, and a platform which meant reform within the party. At this convention I was put on the national committee to represent Massachusetts. On our return from Cincinnati there was an enthusiastic ratification at Faneuil Hall to confirm the action of the Massachusetts delegation."

I give the following extract from my father's speech at that meeting, the first and last that he ever made on an occasion of note: —

"Let me add one word upon a subject which is too often classed with the sentimental politics of theorists and unpractical men, — civil service reform. The present generation has been so long accustomed to the abuse of the government service by making office the reward for past, or the bribe for future, political work, that we have almost forgotten the origin of the evil habit into which both political parties have been led; and we are blinded by habit to the dangers into which it is drawing us. Will you indulge me for one moment in a reminiscence and in a parallel? Some of us now here well remember the thrill of indignation with which the announcement was received some forty-seven years ago that General Jackson, then just entered upon his high office, had at one fell swoop removed nearly all the subordinates in the government service, replacing them by his own partisans. From the humblest tide-waiter or porter, and the smallest country postmaster upward, all were swept away.

This little army was then insignificant, compared with its present immense numbers, but at one blow more changes were forcibly made than had occurred by death, resignation, and removal since the foundation of our government. . . . The evil system inaugurated by Jackson, and indorsed by Marey, to-day overshadows the whole of the body politic, just as slavery did thirty years ago.

“In the face of other great issues, and especially with the whole industry of the country paralyzed by an unsound, fluctuating currency, a living lie, which we indorse by enduring, I would not exaggerate the immediate importance of civil service reform; but I do say that in the near future it is the task of young America to remand to its post of duty and of service the office-holding class, which, after growing from a corporal’s guard under General Jackson into a large and compact army, now threatens to rule the whole country.

“We have all been brought up in a wholesome jealousy of even the little standing army of 25,000 men necessary to control the Indians and the Ku Klux, and to garrison our forts; yet we are gradually having fixed upon our necks a trained army of 140,000 officeholders, whose chief business, in the eyes of practical politicians, is to pack the caucus, drum up voters, and perpetuate their own power. Resistance to this danger many will stigmatize as sentimental politics, but I do not hesitate to say here, in the old Cradle of Liberty, that until we have put an end to the growing and dangerous

abuse of the patronage of office, whether by the Executive or by Congress, those who rescued the country from the grasp of slavery will have but half done their work."

My father's pleasant personal relations with General Grant were not affected by political differences. Referring to a visit to Washington just before Hayes's inauguration, he writes : —

" We called on General Grant and had a free talk with him during the last days of his presidency ;" and he goes on to say, as to his successor at Washington : " Of course, I saw President Hayes then, and later, and always had very friendly relations with him. He was not a great man, and had little experience in government, but he was a thoroughly honest one ; and, though making some very grave mistakes in his appointments, and also in his methods of pushing civil service reform (by proclamations and rules rather than by acts), his administration, on the whole, prepared the way for the success of Garfield in the presidential contest of 1880."

The same old controversies went on through the next four years ; and among them, next in importance to the fight against political corruption, was that for sound money. This last had now become further complicated by the efforts which the men, recently enriched by the huge discoveries of silver in the West, were making to have their precious metal freely coined at a rate which would have driven out gold. Their attempt which culminated in the nomination of Bryan as Democratic can-

didate for the presidency in 1896, was now only beginning ; and its first check came from President Hayes's veto of the Bland Silver Bill. As to this, I find among my father's papers an interchange of letters with Mr. Bristow, Secretary of the Interior under President Grant, the same who had unearthed the whiskey frauds, and who would have been nominated as Republican candidate in 1876 but for jealousies among the leaders. In a note from him, written before the veto, he says, "I doubt whether the President will put enough energy and snap into his message." And after the veto came, my father, while finding it "creditable to the President's consistency and courage," missed in it "the ring which might have made it a working force in directing the policy of the country." Of this period he writes in his notes : —

"During the four years of President Hayes's administration I continued an active member of the executive committee which really ran the Republican party ; was in constant communication with the leaders of the party, in Congress and out, and was able to raise a good deal of money for its operations. I also got an insight into the abuses of the party, which I tried in vain to resist and correct. I found with me many good men, but also some of the most unscrupulous bosses, and had a continuing fight with the latter during the whole four years."

By this time most of my father's foreign correspondents, with whose names the reader has been acquainted, had died. I find a consequent dearth of

letters from abroad ; and in the year 1878 Thomas Hughes is the only one who writes of public affairs. I give an extract from his letter : —

“ I watch your politics as usual with great interest, but can't satisfy myself whether the South is dictating the government policy or not. Are Hayes and his cabinet strong enough to keep a straight road ? Hayes seems to me a strong man ; so is Carl Schurz ; so is Evarts ; but one begins to doubt whether they will do much, with a third and more of their term gone already.”

Then came the presidential campaign of 1880. That he took a vigorous part in this is indicated by a note in which Mr. Henry Lee, just before the election, tells him : “ If Garfield is elected, he will owe more to you than to any one man.” But my father was becoming more and more disgusted with the growth of corruption and “ boss-rule ” in the party ; and, looking back on that campaign in after years, he wrote in his notes : —

“ When the presidential contest approached, the national committee was very much divided. The friends of General Grant wished to put him up for the next campaign, giving him a third term as president, and the chairman of the committee was Senator Cameron, a strong Grant man. Blaine's friends were represented by W. E. Chandler, Wm. P. Frye, and Eugene Hale ; and the minority, who really, when well managed, held the balance of power, consisted of the other New England members, Massachusetts leading.

“The Republican convention was called at Chicago in June, 1880, and the preliminary arrangements had already been made by Mr. Cameron as chairman. When I reached Chicago I found the committee almost in a state of chaos, Mr. Cameron having assumed the whole authority, and showing a determination to ignore the majority of the committee, although he had only a minority of the members present. The only way to meet this pretension was for the Independents to join with the Blaine party, and insist upon the right of the majority to rule. In spite of the objections to Grant, I preferred him, as being an honest man, to Blaine ; but, for the purposes of a fair organization of the convention, a combination with the Blaine leaders was necessary, and by patience and firmness we prevented the breaking up of the convention, and finally succeeded in getting George Hoar made chairman of the convention, and in having an organization satisfactory to the majority.

“The convention met in a large building capable of holding 10,000 people. This was packed full by the delegates themselves (the substitutes standing ready to fill vacancies in the delegations), and by an audience consisting largely of Illinois men whose sympathies were with Grant. By the usages of party, the whole arrangement of the convention was with the old national committee, who gave passes for admission, fixed the preliminary rules, and organized the police. During the first struggle, and, indeed, through the whole convention, which lasted

through a very exciting week, constant negotiations were carried on for a coalition between the Independents and the Grant or Blaine parties. In these I had to take a leading part, but nothing could be done, as we resisted firmly putting into the nomination any of the leading bosses on the Grant side, even with the very desirable object in view of defeating Blaine. There was a very strong popular objection to giving Grant, or any president, a third term, as being an innovation on the unwritten understanding which had grown up against having a president for more than two terms ; and to this popular feeling was added the conviction that Grant had gathered around him a very unscrupulous body of partisans who would be sure to perpetuate the Republican abuses.

“ After trying to get the Southern vote for John Sherman, who was the Secretary of the Treasury, and who, by his official influence, had many office-holding delegates in the convention, we at last, through the personal magnetism of General Garfield, who was in the convention as a delegate, managed to throw the Sherman vote over to him, and to get him nominated ; but, unluckily, the Ohio politicians deserted us, their allies, on the question of vice-president, and so gave that office to Arthur, a very strong Grant man, who, however, turned out a great deal better than we had any right to expect from his antecedents as a member of the machine.

“ The moment the nominations were made, everybody, after that exciting and expensive week, was in

a hurry to get home. I had been reëlected for four years as the Massachusetts member of the new national committee, whose business it was to organize the management of the coming political campaign. We, accordingly, met that night to make our arrangements before separating, but the cunning Grant men were more punctual at the meeting than their former opponents, and nearly succeeded in appointing officers of the committee without giving Garfield and his advisers any voice in the selection of those who were to conduct the campaign. With the help of Chandler, Frye, and Hale, we managed to avert this and postpone action until the committee could meet a few weeks later in New York city. It had been one of the most exciting conventions ever known, owing to the close division of the parties, and to the enormous audience, made up largely of Grant's Chicago friends. At one of the evening sessions the audience fairly took possession of the convention; the chairman, George Hoar, sat powerless on the platform striving in vain to bring back order; the crowd below us caught the fever, and one faction after another yelled and paraded with the flags about the hall, acting like so many Bedlamites. An enthusiastic woman jumped on the rail behind the chairman and began to harangue the meeting, balancing herself doubtfully on the narrow edge until ex-Governor Jewell, of Connecticut, one of our members, gallantly supported her by both his hands until she could be pacified. In swinging her parasol about, she nearly struck me, just below her, and to

avoid further danger I raised my umbrella and sat safe under her lee until she subsided. This mad scene lasted over an hour, Mr. Hoar and his supporters doing all they could to restore order, and at last succeeding, — without adjourning the convention to another smaller building, as at one time seemed necessary.

“ To conclude the story of the Garfield campaign. It was, of course, important not to give our candidates entirely over to doubtful friends, and it was of great importance to have a suitable chairman in the national committee. Mr. Garfield urged me to accept the office, but I firmly refused, and at last ex-Governor Jewell, a good business man of tolerable capacity, was fixed upon as chairman. When the national committee met in New York, a sub-committee of three was appointed to nominate officers, and naturally each of the three existing parties was represented on this committee, — W. E. Chandler for Blaine, General John A. Logan for Grant, and myself for the Independents. We had fixed on Jewell for chairman, which irritated Logan, and he refused to have anything to say about the remaining officers, telling us that Conkling and the New Yorkers (who had great political influence and, being at the commercial centre, great means of raising money) would just withdraw, and let the Blaine men and Independents run the campaign to suit themselves. This would have been the worst possible augury for success at the beginning of a great fight, and I insisted on Logan’s being pacified, and asked him whom he

wanted for secretary, which was the next most influential office, and became the most important one. After some difficulty and much storming, he nominated Senator Dorsey, as a rich and successful mining manager of great organizing power ; and as — assented, and I knew nothing of Dorsey except that he had been, and perhaps still was, a senator, I, for the sake of harmony, agreed, and we reported unan- imously. Hardly was this done when one of our committee came to me.¹

I could not stand this responsibility, and at once called one or two members out to consult about the best course. While there, Senator Platt, of New York, attacked me for having opposed him as chair- man ; and while debating matters with him in the lobby, a few minutes were lost ; and when we re- turned to the hall for the purpose of my recalling my assent to the nomination of Dorsey, we found they had voted in our absence and the committee was adjourning. It was too late to do anything, and so, all through the campaign, I was forced to see it carried on by the worst machine men in the whole party. Governor Jewell was a very weak man and allowed the secretary to run the campaign, and all I could do was to insist that none of the money we raised in New England (about one third of the whole fund) should be touched by Dorsey.

“I have always considered this nomination of Dorsey, and his subsequent management of the Re-

¹ I omit the details of certain reports relating to Senator Dorsey. — Ed.

publican party, as the beginning of the end of the rule of the party, and have often smiled at the part which Massachusetts, representing as she did the reform element, had in this disgraceful appointment.

"We carried Garfield into power, perhaps through, perhaps in spite of, Dorsey's influence; then came the assassination; then a better administration from Arthur than we had any right to expect."

Whether or not "the beginning of the end" of Republican rule had begun, it is clear from the following "Resolution of the Executive Committee of the National Republican Committee" that my father checked so far as he could any improper use of the campaign funds during the pending contest: —

NEW YORK, *October 28, 1880.*

Voted, that the Chairman and Mr. Forbes be a committee to use any money raised by the latter, and by the Massachusetts Auxiliary Committee, in such manner as they may deem most judicious.

Having forced a decent disposition of the money, at any rate, for which he was responsible in that campaign, he had the satisfaction of finding that the nature of his requirements was recognized by those who called upon him for this money. When the chairman of the Republican committee of a neighboring State, writing from the United States senate chamber on July 3, 1882, told him how much help was required in that State, he ended by saying, "I hope to receive a contribution from you,

and trust that I need not assure you that whatever you may send me shall be expended only for purposes that would commend themselves to you."

What my father considered a proper use of campaign funds, the following "rough notes" will show. They were written in 1884, after the nomination of candidates for the presidential campaign then going on, but it is convenient to insert them here : —

"For the past eight years the political money raised in Massachusetts has been entirely by written and personal application, and very largely from the business men of Boston, the manufacturers not contributing much, and the office-holders nothing, except what the congressional committee collected. This last method of levying has been entirely stopped now by law.

"The proper mode of distributing is through the chairman of the national committee, or the executive committee, and this has been the rule; but money is sometimes given with the special understanding that some member of the committee shall see to its application, and occasionally the purpose is defined by the subscriber.

"So much for method of collection and disbursement. The legitimate expenses of the national campaign can only be indicated in a very general way, extending from barbecues at the South to clambakes and public meetings at the North. Some, however, can be specified. The New York headquarters bill, with its Fifth Avenue or other rooms

for four months, its staff of correspondents and traveling agents for canvasses, is always a heavy item. Public speakers sent over the country by the national committee are not often paid for their speeches, but their expenses are usually paid out of the fund and are apt to be large, — traveling, as they do, in palace cars and living in first-class hotels; and they cannot well be scrutinized carefully, through vouchers or by auditors. Flag-raising, torchlight processions, and bands of music swallow the fund fast. The nominating conventions are costly, but paid in part by the cities where the convention sits. Other States have usually called largely upon the commercial ones, and especially upon the cities, for their expenses, which ought to be (and which in Massachusetts are) chiefly collected by local committees. Newspaper advertisements are sometimes very costly indeed; extra copies of papers foot up a heavy bill, as does the distribution of campaign matter from headquarters; the newspaper supplement, or broadside, often going in the same wrappers without additional postage, is a very valuable method, and in proportion to its value is not a costly one; but there is abundant room to spend money legitimately in this way. The most costly part of the last Republican campaign was the picketing of the Indiana border for the legitimate purpose of preventing Kentucky from colonizing its spare voters into Indiana, where the requirement as to prior residence was short and loose. Men were brought from Kentucky also to attend the Indiana

polling places and identify, or scare away, Kentucky residents who illegally offered to vote. This was right while fairly conducted, but, of course, very liable to abuse and to the charge of illegality and fraud; similar scrutiny of the polls is necessary in large cities, and very expensive.

“In all these methods of using money, high pay for workers and great waste of money is almost inevitable. There is, of course, much room for abuse, and the only real check upon it is to avoid trusting money with the Dorsey class, but they are for such purposes the smart ones, and there is great temptation for both parties to employ them. It will be interesting to see how the Independents and the Cleveland folks will avoid these and other similar dangers. Printing and distributing votes and bringing voters to the polls on election day is all right and will easily absorb very large sums. In Massachusetts it is generally done by local contribution, but money is almost always asked of us for this sort of work in other States where (especially in the country) ready money is really scarce. From some of the Southern States money is often asked for to pay the poll tax of the negroes, necessary to be done before voting, and wanted theoretically to pay only the taxes of those unable to pay themselves. This use is certainly very objectionable, but by some is claimed to be legitimate. It would soon absorb very large sums for taxes if the smarter voters, as well as the poorer ones, should learn to depend on this mode of paying their poll taxes, and would do double mischief by

making an election depend upon the 'barrel,' and by degrading the ballot at the South, where the colored voters ought to be leveled up and taught that the ballot is their only safety, and their most valuable possession."

In addition to these "rough notes," I give what my father wrote on the same subject in December, 1890. It shows how the abuses against which he protested in 1884 had been growing in the mean while : —

"I see that what, in 1884, I considered a great extravagance was very much exceeded two years ago when Harrison and Cleveland were the candidates.

"Quay, Wanamaker, perhaps Carnegie, and other protectionists deliberately put the leading manufacturers on the gridiron and 'fried the fat out of them,' — a phrase obtained from an intercepted Republican manager's dispatch. Besides the ordinary contributions from office-holders, office-seekers, contractors, and other jobbers, at least \$400,000 was levied in large sums on the manufacturers during the last days of the campaign, and was absolutely used to perpetuate what is called protection of the workmen, but is nothing short of plunder by the capitalists who have planted their money in manufacturing works."

To turn now to state politics. For some years before 1882, a continuous fight had been going on to prevent the election to the governorship of Mas-

sachusetts of General Butler. As far back as 1879, I find a letter from Judge Hoar, in which, replying to a warning note from my father, he says: "While I am drowsily whiling away this leisure summer time, your letter comes like 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness.' . . . I am not at all alarmed, though sorry, of course, that the fight with Satan is to be again on our hands.

"I think the accession of — and — to the camp of Butler Democracy has an element in it of some value to our side; the political adhesion that lasts just as long as a lucrative office can be held, is not the kind that the bulk of mankind admire. So be cheerful."

But now (1882) the general at last attained the object of his ambition. Of this my father writes in his notes: "After a hard fight amid much mismanagement, he was run in for one term as governor. He made so many splurges, and showed his colors so completely, that one term sufficed; and it looks as if we had got rid of him, in spite of his wonderful faculty of hitting the small popular currents and coming down on his feet."

My father was out of health at the time of the campaign, and only just towards its close was able, as he says in a letter to Whittier, to "brace up a little and take a hand in the final charge, too late to do much good." He thanks Mr. Whittier for having given such help as he could, and proceeds: —

"No evil is entirely without its uses; even hell-bore and deadly nightshade can be turned to good;

and Butler, bad as he is, in some directions, is not all bad. His very vices have a largeness about them which partially redeems him from our scorn. Nobody can say of him, as the country boy said to his own father, 'Come to town, daddy; dreadful mean men get into office here.' I confess a preference for a bold, bad man, over the mean ones who have infested some of our high places. Their boldness, like the rattle of the coiled snake, gives warning, and they don't strike in the dark. The strong men of Massachusetts have been lulled into fatal security by the too often repeated cry of wolf, when there was no wolf. Now he is in our fold we must band together, and we must corral him around during this year and drive him out at the end of it, although it is much harder to do this than to have kept him out of the fort by timely work.

"I hope to have strength given me to join in this good work, and I know you are never appealed to in vain for the help of your aged arm. May it long be preserved for new blows for the right."

The "strong men of Massachusetts" did band together; General Butler was defeated, and a very different person succeeded him, — Governor Robinson.

During this year (1883) came the death of Gustavus Fox, whose conduct, under Secretary Welles of the Navy Department, throughout the war, my father had so much admired. He now seized the opportunity of testifying in a public print to this "unpretending naval lieutenant, who, placed without

warning virtually at the head of one of the most important departments of the government, always did the right thing at the right time, and directed all the operations of the navy much more directly and completely than it was possible for any officer to direct the operations of the army." So passed away one more of those with whom he had worked during the struggle for life of the republic.

At this time Mrs. Lucy Stone and her friends were demanding the suffrage for women. Of this he declared himself a "thorough advocate," only wishing that "they had done more on the school committees," in which they already had the power of voting. He even proposed that there should be a clause like the following in favor of this concession in the next Republican platform for the State : —

"*Resolved*, That whenever the women of this Commonwealth who would, under the educational clause of our Constitution (or law), be entitled to vote, ask with reasonable unanimity for the suffrage, we cordially approve of accepting them as co-workers in the toils and duties of government.

"We strongly recommend the step towards this desirable end, of allowing each town and municipality to concede to its women who are qualified the right to vote upon all municipal and town affairs, thus extending an experiment which has been partially tried here in regard to school business, and still more broadly by our conservative cousins abroad."

The time, however, was near at hand when any

official responsibility for "planks" in political platforms was to be at an end for him.

As a member of the national committee, he attended the Chicago Convention in 1884, when that body nominated Mr. Blaine as Republican candidate for president. This was the last straw. The tie that had bound him to the Republican party for twenty-seven years had to break. Looking half sick with disgust and disappointment, he returned home, never again to take an active part in any political organization. As to this I quote from the notes as follows : —

"At the Chicago Convention in June, 1884, when Blaine was nominated, I was urged to accept another nomination as the Massachusetts member of the committee, but I had seen too much of the methods of party rule, even under a reasonably good administration ; and with the chances of Blaine being elected I could see nothing but disgrace in being connected with the management, so I absolutely refused to serve, and while the Chicago Convention was dispersing, steamed up and started for home, free from further duty as a party man."

I cannot better explain my father's reasons for standing aloof from the Republican party, after actively supporting it for so many years, than by giving a copy of his letter to the chairman of the Massachusetts Independents : —

NAUSHON, *October 29, 1884.*

MY DEAR SIR, — Your note of October 27 has only just reached me. I prefer not to be put forward as vice-president.¹ Had I remembered, when writing to your first Independent meeting, the circular which had been sent me, I should have escaped the false position in which I found myself, of appearing as a leader in active politics. I am now asked the reasons why I cannot support Mr. Blaine, and why I think the Democratic party a less dangerous alternative. I will try to give you a few of them.

First. I object to Mr. Blaine because I have carefully studied his correspondence (old and new) with Mr. Fisher and others, and because I have entire faith in Mr. Mulligan's testimony regarding the circumstances under which the first letters were brought before the public in 1876. This faith is based not only on Mr. Mulligan's unimpeached reputation, but also from personal knowledge of him. I consider those letters alone amply sufficient in any ordinary case; but when confirmed by Mr. Mulligan's testimony and Mr. Blaine's own admission before his colleague in Congress, I can find no possible room for doubt that Mr. Blaine stands convicted of having offered for sale his political influence, and of having tried to suborn the witness called to testify upon his case. Either offense seems to me absolutely to disqualify him for leading upward and onward the Republican party, which many

¹ Vice-president of a proposed meeting of Independents. — ED.

of us still believe to be the party of progress and of honest government, and which we expect to see assume that position again, either when Mr. Blaine is defeated, or when the Democratic party may have justified the fears of its enemies by maladministration. The election of Mr. Blaine I should consider the suicide of the Republican party and the inauguration of a new one which would combine the worst elements of American politics, now represented by Messrs. Blaine, Butler, Kelly, and Denis Kearney.

Second. I object to Mr. Blaine because his management of our foreign affairs while Secretary of State was sensational and eminently dangerous, warning us against what he might do in the presidency.

Third. Remembering, as I do, that the twenty-five millions of our people who support the Democratic ticket, with the exception of a very small fraction, are just about as honest and patriotic as those who compose our own party, and recollecting, too, that we have in the latter our full share of star-route and other soldiers of fortune, I can only reach the conclusion, already suggested in my former letter to the Boston meeting of Independents, that there is less danger in to-day trying the experiment of a Democratic turn (which I thought premature when Sumner, Greeley, and other such men tried it) than there would be in promoting the election of Mr. Blaine, allied, as I believe him to be, with General Butler, and subject, if elected, not only to his influence, but to that of the star-route and stock speculating clique of Republicans who now seem to gather around him.

Fourth. I object to Mr. Blaine because, when speaker, he appointed General Butler chairman of the Committee upon Civil Service Reform, thus showing in the most active way possible his hostility to that important measure.

Whether you make a mistake or not in the method of carrying out your principles, I abate nothing of my warm approbation of your determination to defy the tyranny of party while following out your convictions of duty. I then omitted one suggestion which I think very important. I have seen with pain the bitter and personal tone which has been given to the discussion on both sides in this campaign. Invective and personal attack, like overloaded guns, inevitably react upon those using such weapons, and I venture the counsel that you should use the greatest moderation of statement while pushing every legitimate method of explaining your position, and especially of organizing your canvass by steady, systematic work. With these words of caution, that I beg you not to interpret as throwing cold water upon your enthusiasm, which I applaud and admire,

I am your friend and servant,

JOHN M. FORBES.

The notes continue: "Having got entirely free from the shackles of party, by voting for Cleveland on each of the campaigns when he was a candidate, I find myself left free to give what influence I can to whichever party seems most likely to carry into

effect the two important practical issues which seem to me now before the country, civil service reform, and still more, a readjustment of the tariff; and, of course, to vote, without regard for party, for the candidate in each federal, state, or local election who seems to me most creditable."

This break with the machine politicians brought him in contact with some of the younger men who were working for reform, among whom was the son of his old friend, Governor Andrew. In the post-script of a letter to him he says:—

"Whether you young men make mistakes or not, I had much rather see you carrying into effect whatever you, after mature examination, think sound, than to wait, as some very good men seem to wish, and follow blindly the footpaths, worn, and perhaps worn out, by their paternal (or maternal) relatives. I would by no means throw any cold water upon your organization."

There was much pain in the rupture with his old party; a pain that can scarcely be understood by those who had not fought and suffered with it through its dark days; but no real friendship was broken, and Judge Hoar thus writes to him:—

E. R. HOAR TO J. M. FORBES.

MY DEAR MR. FORBES,—Your letter came last evening, but there was nothing in it to indicate where you are; and so I send my reply to Sears Building, hoping that some traces of you may there be preserved. . . .

I have been glad to hear from you once or twice this summer, through Sam. It is more and more an astonishment to me how anybody that was the friend of Whittier, and knew and valued Grant, and Sherman, and Sheridan, and believes in honest money and keeping the public faith, can encourage young men to hitch themselves on to the Democratic party! As for improving *it*, you might as well turn in a few lambs to improve a pack of hungry wolves.

Well, God bless you! and improve your sight! for you are one of the very few cronies I have left, and "there are glimmers o' sense in the Dougal creature."

Hoping to see you on Saturday,

I am faithfully yours, E. R. HOAR.

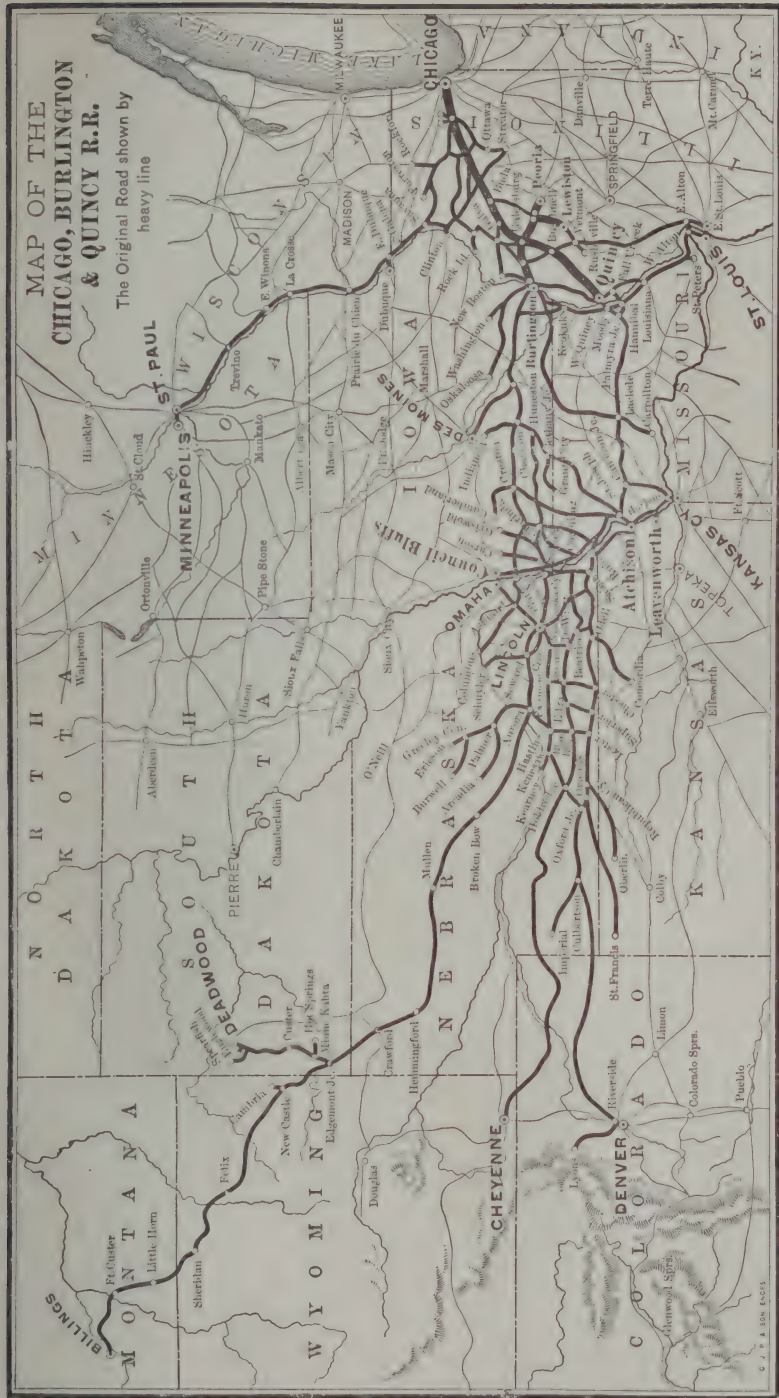
My father's notes now resolve themselves into some brief account of the business of his firm of J. M. Forbes & Co., and of the ingress and egress of partners; the house was coming to be chiefly occupied in the care of trust funds and the property of its members, with occasional ventures in grain or tea, while the senior partner devoted most of his business hours to the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad.

Long after leaving China, at twenty-four years of age, he continued (as appears from his correspondence) to be the guiding spirit of Russell & Company, — occupying the post, officially, of arbitrator in the various matters of dispute which seem not infrequently to have arisen between the active part-

ners; and suggesting lines of policy and conduct in the general management of the house. This position, as his work in the railroad grew, he finally gave up.

Railroad management, as has been shown, was a business for which, at the time he took hold of it, there were no precedents: he had to learn as he went; and he felt that to his two friends, Mr. Brooks and Mr. Joy, each in his several way, he owed much of the success that attended his efforts. The one was an engineer with the clearest possible head and an unending power of work, the other a keen, clever, energetic Western lawyer; and both labored as hard as even he wished, — or harder, which is saying a good deal.

With such forces in its management, and the great prairies only waiting to be opened, to give food and work to millions, the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Company grew from a "feeder of the Michigan Central" of one hundred and fifty miles into the great organization of to-day, having over seven thousand miles of railroad to operate, giving work to a small army of employees, and among railroads having the name of so conservative a management as to be considered a safe investment for women and minors. There were, of course, periods of depression, and fights with adverse state and United States restrictive legislation; but with its able board of directors, and such men at their head as my father and the young cousin, now the president, who yearly developed more and more capacity



FORTY YEARS' GROWTH OF THE CHICAGO, BURLINGTON AND QUINCY RAILROAD

for railroad affairs, and advanced by strides into the confidence of my father and his colleagues, this great machine has had a history of remarkable prosperity. My father could be a restraining agency as well as a constructive one. In his notes he says:—

“It had become quite common for —— to come from the West with a plan for a hundred or two miles of new road, which then meant about \$30,000 of seven or eight per cent. bonds per mile; and on one occasion when such a branch was about being authorized I related a story of my Naushon experience. We had been troubled with cats, which destroyed our birds, and so we put a bounty on killing them of so much for every cat’s tail brought in, which amount proving insufficient we raised the price until we found, or thought we found, that they were raising cats to bring in to sell to us. ‘Now,’ said I to the directors, ‘I am convinced that the contractors and speculators are building roads merely to sell to us, and the more we buy of them, the more cats’ tails will be brought in to us!’ That cat was not bought; the story got around, and in Boston circles the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy branches were known as the C. B. and Q. cats’ tails.”

This story is followed by one of a Western journey, about which the notes go on to say:—

“My next memory carries with it a moral. My connection with the Western railroads naturally led me to various journeys in the West, among which was one made in company with Leonard and Arthur Beckwith in May, 1867. We went, per-

haps, as far as Clinton by rail. We were on a Northwestern Railroad train and were approaching the point on the Mississippi at which we intended to take boat, when I stopped the conductor of the train, to ask him some questions about boats going up the river, which were to some extent rivals of the railroad. The official, who in those days was a very important personage on those roads, replied by saying, 'Here, just give me your check!' This I did, at the same time asking him his name and putting it down in my memorandum book. Struck by the incivility of the man, I sat down and wrote a short account of his behavior to the president, with whom I was well acquainted, thinking the rebuke would do the conductor and the company some good. After writing it, I changed my mind, and instead of sending it to the president of that road, I sent it to the general manager of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy, which was running in competition, and told him that I hoped the Northwestern had a great many just such conductors, and that he would take warning from the incident and instruct our conductors to be very civil; which I think had a good effect, as the reputation of our officials has been good in this respect."

There were all sorts of difficulties in railroad management, not at all anticipated by my father when he first undertook the guidance of one line, and then another, in the growing business of the West. From the beginning, certain maxims had been fixed in his mind as part of his commercial

code. Among these was, "Never undertake to 'hunt with the hounds and run with the hare.'" At one time he was faced by a dilemma of this description, partly due, as he felt, to his own want of careful inspection of the business methods of his fellow directors in a railroad company. These directors thought it allowable to be interested in the construction company of a branch railroad then building, the contracts of which were loosely framed. Some of the bonds of this road had been sold to stockholders of the parent line, some taken by new investors, and some by the directors, who all had thought well of them.

The money produced by the bonds had been used up, the branch line had been poorly constructed and was still incomplete, and the directors were devoting such earnings as it was making to paying their own construction company (this having, in their eyes, and perhaps legally, the first lien on such earnings) instead of paying the coupons on the mortgage bonds. When my father came to know of the state of affairs he twice urged his colleagues to have the outside bondholders paid their interest, pointing out the impropriety of being directors and constructors on the same line. They were simply unable to see it from his point of view, and refused to entertain any such plan. He hesitated as to what he ought to do. The directors were personal friends, with whom he had acted for years, and they had already received proxies for the shareholders' meeting then close at hand.

He was tempted to sell out his interest in the road and let the matter pass, especially as he was convinced that no dishonesty or even impropriety had been intended. Then came the feeling that *he* was responsible both from his lack of care and his present knowledge of the proceedings. As has been said, a yearly meeting of the stockholders was pending. He appealed to the shareholders of the road with a printed statement of the case, which resulted at the meeting in an overturn of the board of directors and practically a new management.

On one occasion there had come a temporary drop in the market value of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy shares. Some people thought it due to stock manipulation adverse to the road, and my father was asked about it. In replying he says, "There is no proof of this," and adds, "I am obliged to keep to my rôle of never advising anybody to buy or sell Chicago, Burlington and Quincy stock. Besides the soundness of the rule, I have long noticed that those *in* a concern get their feelings interested and often their judgment warped, and are not as good judges as cool outsiders."

I find also in the notes the following : —

"I had been averse to taking the official position of president of the company, but finding that Mr. — was not satisfactory and that my cousin, Mr. Perkins, was not yet sufficiently known to warrant putting him at the head of the road, I concluded that it was wiser to manage it directly as president, and so consented with much reluctance to try the

experiment. I came to this conclusion when I was out West with Will, and, in order to be in time for the meeting of the board for reorganization, I then had the fastest railroad run of my life. At this meeting I accepted the position of president, and held it for two or three years, until the younger directors, and indeed all of them, became fully aware of the fact that C. E. Perkins, who had won the confidence of the board and of the stockholders, was entirely competent to run the road, and then I gladly turned over the presidency to him."

My father remained, however, chairman of the board of directors until his death; able to do little work for the last part of the time, but always enjoying the meetings, because of the friendly attitude of his fellow directors; he mentioned often the kindness of Mr. John L. Gardner, his successor in the place of chairman, who unhappily survived him only a short time.

On my father's death the board of directors presented to my mother the resolution which will be found in an appendix.¹

¹ See Appendix A, p. 239.

CHAPTER XXI

LAST YEARS

ONE may say that in 1884 the active political life of my father closed. But, as we have seen, he continued interested in politics from the independent point of view, supporting those candidates who appealed to him as honest men and capable of doing well the desired work.

Old scenes had become more vivid, and the ties to old friends closer. He wrote from Naushon, in October, 1886, to his cousin, Henry Lee : —

“ We are coming up in a week or ten days for good, and then I shall hope to see you in the cocked hat and feathers of chief marshal. Don’t extinguish the ancient Harry whom I so much like, in spite of his obstinacy and other stiff-necked proclivities. I am reminded, too, that I did not respond to a line of yours about our good Colonel Frank,¹ who has gone before. If the spirit ever moves me, I have been meaning to make a sketch of that bright autumn day when he went to sea with his regiment. I was having a hunting party, and he promised to turn the transport a little north,

¹ His brother, Colonel Francis L. Lee, of the 44th Massachusetts regiment.—ED.

in passing Tarpaulin Cove, and pick up a buck, which we killed and had ready for his mess table. We watched from the hills all day in the intervals of the hunt, but night came on before the ship appeared, and I forget the result, — but the picture of his genial face was before us all that day, and I never now get with my gun on my knee on those southern shore hills without his face returning to me; and the thought of that gallant band of young fellows under his leadership passing by us, while we were engaged in what we tried to make sport, amid the shadows of the future that surrounded them. I have not seen him of late, and prefer to think of him in his glorious maturity.”

The older he grew the more his old interest in ships and shipping returned to him. He became part owner of two sailing vessels, and wished to hear of all modern improvements in construction. He had had a very deep feeling about loss of life at sea, and had always instructed his captains to send a man aloft just after sunset and before sunrise to scan the horizon and be sure no vessel was within sight needing help. He had also commanded that in case one of his ships encountered any craft in distress, every chest of tea or bale of cotton was if needful to go overboard to lighten the ship, rather than that a life should be lost. This humane feeling was common to himself and his brother Bennet; and one day in 1884, when my uncle had some illness which aggravated his chronic deafness, my father and I went to see him. It was just after the

wreck of the City of Columbus on the Devil's Reef, Gay Head. Another steamer had passed by on the morning after the wreck, the captain of which, not seeing with an opera-glass any sign of life on the ship, had gone on his way without running nearer to make sure. As a matter of fact, a good many lives might have been saved if he had taken a more careful survey. We found my uncle very limp in bed and scarcely speaking, and my father, who disliked his brother's ear-trumpet and never could learn to speak properly through it, said to me, "Ask him what he thinks of the conduct of Captain — in not running nearer the City of Columbus?" No electric shock could have worked more quickly. My uncle sat straight up in bed, and in very seafaring language expressed his opinion of Captain —. Then my father bade me tell him to write to the papers about it, and my uncle at once seized paper and pencil, and we went our way, leaving the medicine to work, and feeling sure that the old sea-captain was well on the road to recovery.

My father had always strongly inclined towards free trade, holding, however, that duties should be very carefully lowered, and only step by step. He had felt it almost a disgrace when our navigation laws forbade his sailing such ships as he owned in world commerce under the United States flag. He always hoped to live to see this again foremost on the high seas; and in testifying before a congressional committee, he pleaded earnestly that it might be permitted to be raised on a foreign-built vessel;

he wrote also a pamphlet on "Free Ships," and he kept constantly on the lookout for all indications of interest in the subject, either in Congress or the press. In May, 1889, at the meeting of the Tariff Reform League, he gave an address from which I make the following quotations: —

"Fifty years ago Great Britain was protecting her shipbuilders, not so much by national legislation as by permitting a system of guilds which undertook to regulate not only the rates of wages paid for work on ships, but the number of apprentices a shipbuilder might use, and every other detail of his business, and of course endeavored by combination to fix the selling price of vessels. American shipbuilders were free and unprotected, and their maritime genius, exercised freely, enabled them, in spite of high rates of interest and high prices of iron and hemp, to lead the world in foreign commerce, carrying English goods from England to the East, covering the Eastern seas with their flags, and doing absolutely the whole packet business between England and America: so that nobody, however bigoted his admiration of the mother country, ever dreamed of trusting himself to any but an American packet ship on the Atlantic. Steam, and later iron, helped to change the condition of shipbuilding; but while emancipation from guilds and other paternal restrictions has brought the British islands up in the scale, our fatal hallucination in regard to protection has weighed around our necks and landed us on the same shoals from which our competitors had

escaped. The war, with its Confederate cruisers, formed one element, but the pervading influence of the Goddess of Protection has been the continuing cause of our downward career, and now the costly experiment of bounties and subsidies will be urged, and perhaps accepted, by those patriots who wish to keep our taxes high, before we can emerge from the dead sea in which we have become embayed. . . .

“The laws of trade are immutable, and so long as our people set them at defiance in this particular, the American shipowner and merchant must be contented with a very insignificant position. While I am perfectly sure that any impartial coroner’s jury, sitting upon the remains of our foreign shipping interests, would to-day bring in the verdict of ‘protected to death,’ I am a firm believer in resurrection; and when the financial quacks and political machinists have tried their hand in applying the stimulus of jobs, bounties, and subsidies, and have given up the hopeless task, I am sure that competition and free trade in ships, and the materials and supplies for their use, will in due time restore not only our flag to the seas, and the foreign trade which naturally follows it to our citizens, but also the activity to our shipyards which is now a matter of tradition to the young and of memory among the old men!”

This address was afterwards printed in pamphlet form, together, if I recollect aright, with some further arguments in favor of free trade, and was sent to various friends. Mr. William Rathbone was among the number; and he acknowledged its receipt in the following letter:—

WILLIAM RATHBONE TO J. M. FORBES.

18 PRINCES GARDENS, LONDON, S. W., *July 4, 1891.*

MY DEAR MR. FORBES, — You cannot think what pleasure the receipt of your note gave me. You are about the oldest friend we have left in America, and around you so many happy associations and recollections gather, that to receive a note assuring us that we are not forgotten, and that you are, with your old vigor, interested in public affairs, is a very great gratification to us.

My brother, S. G. R., who is here, and who is, like you, an old China merchant, as you will remember, desires to join in remembrances to you. He was, like myself, highly pleased with the receipt of your note.

I had previously received your Free Trade pamphlet, and read it with great interest, for I believe protection is a far more serious crime in its effect on the character of the people than even in its bearings on their material interests. Indeed I believe it to be the one great source of danger to the peace and prosperity of America.

What a splendid country yours would be with free trade and its consequent guarantee of steadiness of employment and wages! I should be inclined to invest there almost every penny I have, under such circumstances, which I should not venture to do while the thunder-cloud of protection hangs over it.

I should be a most ungrateful man if I did not continue to feel the liveliest interest in American affairs. . . .

Your friends here, I think, remain pretty much as usual. I have had tremendous hard work the last three years, on special subjects, but it has agreed with me, as I am happy to see it seems to do with you. Your Scrap Book comes at a time when I hope I shall have leisure to read and thoroughly enjoy it.

Reciprocating heartily your "old-time regard," which I am delighted to think, with you as with us, does not lose its youthful freshness, I remain,

Your faithful friend, W. RATHBONE.

About business, especially in railroad affairs with which he had become so familiar, my father's head remained remarkably clear to the advanced age of eighty or over; and it seemed no effort to him to go into complex questions of their management. He kept up his full interest in the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad, which many years of work had brought him to regard with almost a parental affection; well content that its active management should be in the hands of his cousin, Mr. C. E. Perkins, who had grown into the work under his own eye, and with whom, as lately as 1890, he took a journey to Oregon on business of the road. He kept track of its varied interests, and, as I have said before, took real comfort as chairman of the board in discussing its affairs with his brother directors at their meetings. These meetings he attended whenever health permitted, up to that of the 18th of August, 1898.

Though he had left it years before, he was greatly

grieved by the failure of his old house in China, Russell & Co., occasioned by some speculations¹ in steamers and the close competition by German commission merchants; and still more, he felt as if the stars had fallen when he read one morning in the paper, without any previous warning, that his friends, the time-honored Baring Brothers & Co., had suspended payment. These events seemed to give him an actual physical shock, and almost made him ill.

As time went on, though he kept more vitality than most men have to lose, we all felt that his power of carrying through work was diminishing; and we were glad when his physicians advised less activity in public matters. After that the streams of letters to and from editors and men of all shades of party opinion gradually lessened. Old friends, however, did not forget him any more than he did them; and he had great comfort in receiving from time to time such notes as those which I append, — from two persons as far apart as the poles, his large-hearted friend in London and the shy poet at Amesbury. Each is acknowledging a new edition of the “Old Scrap Book:” —

¹ In view of this collapse of the house, I may mention the advice which he gave to Messrs. Russell & Co. as far back as 1859: “I have all my life tried to preach to the managers of Russell & Co. the pregnant fact that the \$200,000 per annum which they can make net by sticking to commission business alone creates a capital of \$2,000,000 paying net dividends of 10 per cent. per annum, so long as it is well managed, and that any operations which tend to hurt their commission business, like speculations of any sort, are sure to hurt and depreciate the \$2,000,000 corporation capital far more than such operations can benefit by the profit thereon.” — Ed.

FANNY KEMBLE TO J. M. FORBES.

26 HEREFGRD SQUARE, SOUTH KENSINGTON, S. W.,
Monday, January 6, 1890.

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND, — Your young people called and left the books you were kind enough to send me. . . .

I have not much to say of myself that is worth saying, my dear John Forbes, — I am past eighty years old, my eyes are dim, and my ears are deaf, — and my memory is gone, and my mind is dull. But I am free from pain, thank God, and though pretty generally *good for nothing*, have reason to be glad not to be worse than *that*.

Thank you for remembering me so kindly. My friends beyond the Atlantic live in my heart with sincere and grateful affection. Boston and its lovely neighborhood is still vividly remembered with many, many pleasant and dear associations; and Milton Hill and those who were so kind to me there is one of my brightest Massachusetts memories.

God bless you and yours, my dear and kind and constant friend.

I remain always, affectionately and gratefully yours,

FANNY KEMBLE.

JOHN G. WHITTIER TO J. M. FORBES.

AMESBURY, 6th Mo., 12, 1891.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I should have at once acknowledged thy beautiful volume and kind letter, had I not been unable to write, owing to illness, which so affected my failing eyes.

The years rest heavily upon me. I am now in my eighty-fourth year.

I have not forgotten that thirty years ago we met in the electoral college and voted for Abraham Lincoln with the shadow of the coming war resting upon us. How many of that company are left now? Thee and I and Governor Banks, and I can think of no more. Of the sixty-three delegates to the first anti-slavery convention in Philadelphia in 1833, only two remain, — Robert Purvis and myself.

I am thankful that we have outlived chattel slavery, but the rights of the colored citizen are denied, and the entire vote of New England in Congress is neutralized by that of thirty or forty Southern representatives who owe their place to the suppression of the colored vote. Will the time ever come when the Sermon on the Mount and the Declaration of Independence will practically influence our boasted civilization and Christianity?

I take great satisfaction in looking over thy book, and I send with this a little booklet of mine, an octogenarian's last, with the thanks and good wishes of thy old friend,

JOHN G. WHITTIER.

Naushon life continued to give my father great pleasure, and I find him inviting Judge Hoar to the deer hunt of 1891. The judge could not come, and gave his reasons in the following note, whereon are scribbled in pencil, in my father's hand, the words I have inserted in brackets. The two old friends

could still give and take chaff, on my father's independent position in politics and the judge's stanch Republicanism ; and if Judge Hoar could not come to the hunt, a haunch of venison could go to Concord.

E. R. HOAR TO J. M. FORBES.

CONCORD, October 1, 1891.

Your two letters from Naushon and Boston reached me last evening, and they are both very kind and pleasant.

Don't imagine that I am any such broken-down, gloomy, despairing old codger as that one for whom you tried good advice and change of air so successfully. On the contrary, I am serene as a summer morning, — cheerful as a huntsman's chorus, — and, looking back upon a well-spent life, mainly devoted, aside from getting a living, to the support of the Republican party, I look forward with pious trust to whatever blessings may yet be in store [within that party].

As to your pretending to be nearly old enough to be my father, unless upon the maxim of the law, that *malitia supplet aetatem*, and that the length of a life is to be reckoned by its amount of pure cussedness, it's all nonsense, and one of those delusions which attend otherwise excellent men who have poor health and vote the Democratic ticket. You may be a mere trifle my elder ; but how much satisfaction it would give me to know that in many particulars you were as wise, — for example, that you played whist as regularly and well, smoked cigars

with as much comfort, and avoided the Democratic party with the steadiness and constancy that I try to exhibit.

But I cannot accept your kind invitation, because a duty imposed on me by a court, which I unadvisedly undertook, will require my attendance elsewhere at the time of your party. And I must say, besides, that such a limping, halting, fragmentary attachment to a party of merrymakers as I should be, would be a spectacle to angels and men which I should hardly think it right to exhibit.

I am delighted to hear that you have the new lease of life you speak of, and hope you will go back to all your good old ways [including the Republican dynasty], and stay there indefinitely.

Meantime I shall always be refreshed whenever we come together, in body or mind, and if in neither by adverse fate, can assure you that we shall always be very much one at heart.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

CONCORD, *October*, 1891.

MY *Deer* MR. FORBES, — Dweller in the forest and the wilderness! Eking out your scanty subsistence by hunting and fishing! No doubt at this moment exulting in the thought of that stag; and saying to all comers, “Veni! (or if not *veni* himself, at least *veni*’s son!) Vidi! Vici!” What splendid bounty you show in forwarding such a share of the fruits of the chase to the humble dwellers in Concord, unused to such luxuries! But are you sure

that your own stock of provisions will last through the winter? How can I sit down before that haunch when roasted, with any comfort, if I think that the munificent giver may himself be at the brink of starvation before spring? Be sure, if any such catastrophe should be impending, to let me know it seasonably. I might spare a few potatoes, or turnips, to help you through.

Meantime I remain your anxious, but obliged friend,

E. R. HOAR.¹

Echoes from past correspondence also returned to him from time to time. A few years later than these notes from Judge Hoar came a line from Miss M. A. Dodge,² saying she was writing the Life of J. G. Blaine, and asking leave to use parts of a letter from my father to Mr. Blaine, which she inclosed,

¹ My father greatly valued the friendship of Judge Hoar. Of his esteem for my father, I have recently been shown an interesting expression in a letter to a friend, written by a leading lawyer of Boston. He was on his way one day to Judge Hoar's office, when he met my father, in the odd but comfortable apparel that he sometimes wore on horseback, — probably just on the way between his own office and the stable. In mentioning this fact to Judge Hoar, the gentleman added some comments on those queer garments. The letter goes on: "Judge Hoar parted his coat-tails, stood up before the steam radiator, and spoke with great earnestness of what Mr. Forbes had done for his country. No American ought to criticise him for any personal peculiarities. In the war of the rebellion he did more for his country than any other private citizen, and we owed our success as much to him as to any other man," and much else to the same effect. — ED.

² Gail Hamilton. — ED.

written before some of the later events in that gentleman's life had wholly closed their personal relations. My father gave the required permission, and added: "I had forgotten that, among the many points at which I had crossed Mr. Blaine's brilliant path, I had agreed with him on any one subject."

His attention now inclined more and more to his old pastimes of tree-planting and yacht-building; his last experiment with yachts being the *Wild Duck*, a schooner built in 1890, with Belville coil boilers and auxiliary screw. He was never tired of praising the Belville boilers as economizing water and minimizing risk from explosions; and he urged Secretary Herbert to forward their use in the navy. He made one long cruise in the *Wild Duck* as far as the Windward Islands, in 1892, and was always best pleased when a stiff breeze from the proper quarter justified him in insisting, in the teeth of his captain, on feathering the propeller and setting all the sail the little schooner would carry. He used to send photographs of this favorite yacht to his friends; and Mrs. Kemble acknowledges the receipt of some of them in the following pleasant note:—

FANNY KEMBLE TO J. M. FORBES.

86 GLOUCESTER PLACE, PORTMAN SQUARE, W.,
November 29, 1891.

Thank you, dear John Forbes, for the sweet dead leaves of your dear American woods, full of memories to me, and thank you for the three likenesses

of the brave Wild Duck, the bonny steam yacht, of which, as you proudly say, England cannot show the like, and which has done already such worthy sea work. I cannot write, even dictating, a letter worthy to answer yours, but with affectionate love and gratitude for your constant friendship, remain yours and Sarah's gratefully attached,

FANNY KEMBLE.

After his love of yachts, or perhaps before it, came that of horses. He used to say that the only drawback to a voyage was that one could not ride on shipboard. He had a most delicate hand on a horse, and even in old age, riding or driving, could calm a nervous animal. Riding was the last active exercise which he gave up;¹ he would face north-east snowstorms, and rush through blinding rain and sleet when eighty years of age. He never failed to attend the Loyal Legion dinners; and from these, and their patriotic songs, which were among his most cherished enjoyments, he would ride home late at night, sometimes in a zero temperature, when far past seventy. He used to drive in and out of Boston, when nearly eighty-five years old, in a sort of sleigh with a buggy top, quite open in front; and yet he had suffered all his life, when not on the move, from a poor circulation. He invented for use on horseback a marvelous waterproof apron which tied about his waist and was divided so

¹ In a letter dated 1875, he says: "When I can no longer enjoy riding, don't regret my going hence."

as to cover his thighs; and with this contrivance and high leather leggings encasing his legs, with arctics on his feet, and a cloak, with a peaked hood to cover his head, he defied the weather, looking, as one of his family informed him, like a member of the Ku-Klux Klan.

Up to a late date he maintained his habit of going on long journeys. Trains never tired him, and he often slept better on them or in boats than at home. Florida, as a stopping-place, was the one he seemed to prefer, as its climate soothed the chronic cough from which he suffered; and he went thither many times.

Notwithstanding his immense vitality, my father's physical ailments came on apace in later years; the energy used, in former times, for such large objects, became hard for him to control when these were no longer open to him, and when he gradually felt his inability to work without confusion and fatigue of mind and body. But the old wish to share what he had with others remained as strong as ever. Two of his grandchildren were much touched at being asked by him, when they were about to leave home for California, in the spring of 1897, to take with them a check for \$500, for use in case they should meet, in their travels, invalids or others who might need help.

Towards the end, in particular, his being no longer able to take a hand in influencing public affairs, and the increasing infirmities of age, prevented his wishing even to hear of passing events. He scarcely spoke

of the late war with Spain (April, 1898), but when war was declared he exclaimed, "Outside a lunatic asylum, I don't believe there was ever such a set of idiots as our Houses of Congress!" And again, "This is no war of philanthropy; it is a political game to keep the Republican party in power;" and lastly, when the war was over, he said, "I would give Spain the amount of our war debt five times over to take those islands back again." He clearly foresaw the source of danger and perplexity these possessions were likely to become to his country.

During the summer and autumn of 1897 he drove daily, while at Naushon, inspecting the tree-planting, and fences, and the "Sargent treatment"¹ of old forest favorites whose lives he wished to prolong. After his inspection he would get out of the wagon and lie down, with his head in the shade, and sleep for half an hour or so. Then his saddle-horse would be brought, and he would mount and ride back, sometimes four or five miles, to the mansion house, — his man always riding close beside him, however, for his failing sight made this necessary.

We could see that the present grew dim for him, as for so many old people; but he still dwelt with much pleasure on the memory of old friends, constantly referring to the good, pure, and useful life of his old neighbor and his sister's friend, Mrs. Henry Ware, Jr., long ago dead, whose daughters he rejoiced to know were carrying on their mother's good work. And pleasant memories of other old friends

¹ So called after Professor Charles S. Sargent, of Harvard. — ED.

seemed often to bring him comfort. All his life he had had the power of very keen suffering; and when he lost those he loved, he used to try to stifle the sense of pain by strenuous work. This trait became more marked in old age; and I think that, half consciously and half unconsciously, he tried not to realize the death of those who were dear to him.¹ It was a very beautiful and affecting thing to see how the young people to whom he had been so kind now gathered around him and tried in every way to cheer and brighten his life.

In July, 1898, as my mother did not feel equal to undertaking the move to Naushon, it was decided that my husband and I should take our family to the island, and that my father should come there when he pleased. We moved down, accordingly, and in a few days he arrived, on the *Wild Duck*, with his friend and physician, Dr. Stedman, and his eldest grandson. He only stayed a few days, however, and then sailed for Fortress Monroe, with the same party and an old friend, Mr. William Hale. He was never seasick in his life; all suffering from that cause he termed "weak-mindedness;" and he was always rather bored by calms. The friends reported that, as a whole, he had enjoyed the voyage to Norfolk and back; but on his return he seemed very tired.

The next week he had two slight attacks of unconsciousness. Notwithstanding this, he had one

¹ My brother William died one year and one day before his father.
— Ed.

more ride, and said that it did him good to "get his leg over a horse's back again."

On the first of September he became seriously ill. But in the intervals of the disease he enjoyed much the visit of his old friend, Captain Oliver Eldridge, who came from San Francisco largely in order to see him; and the comfort which my father took in his company, in sailing with him in the *Wild Duck*, and in talking over old times with him, was a sight very pleasant for those about him.

He delighted, at this time, in a little seven-year-old grandchild, often repeating, "I cannot tell how I love that child," and taking her hand, and saying, in the most lovely and tender tones, "You little darling!" Even at the times when he was most depressed, he would rouse himself to listen with pleasure to Longfellow's poem on "Agassiz's Fiftieth Birthday," and other little pieces which she recited to him.

My mother had been ill, so that it had been thought unwise to move him back to Milton; but she was now better, and on Monday, September the 26th, Dr. Stedman and my eldest sister came to the island to go home with him. The next day a brisk north wind came up, covering the bay with white caps; and bright sunshine streamed into the house. My father sat in the parlor until it was time to go, and then asked to be taken into each of the ground-floor rooms. He sat at his writing-table, whence so many letters had taken flight, and touched lovingly the inkstand and pens as if loath to part from these

old friends. Then my husband led him to the carriage, where his daughter was waiting for him. The little granddaughter was brought out and held up to him in the wagon, and he kissed her lovingly and bade her good-by, and then said to my sister, as they drove off, looking up at the old mansion house, "Never again, perhaps." He was driven carefully to the wharf, where the launch, steered by his faithful Charles Olsen, was ready for him. The gun of the Wild Duck at her moorings saluted him as he steamed past her down the harbor; and so he left the island.

I feel as if any vivid life ended for him here. He arrived safely in Milton, whither we followed him in a couple of days. He drove as far as our house a few times, but seemed very languid. On Thursday, October the 6th, pneumonia set in, and he died on the following Wednesday morning, October the 12th, 1898, at eight o'clock, having had little real consciousness from the beginning of this last illness. But he recognized my mother, and knew others of us, dimly, from time to time.

Mrs. Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic" had been for years the tune that stirred and moved him most, and it was the last that he greeted with the old motion of the hand, beating time. At his funeral it was sung; and we all felt that no truer citizen ever served the republic which inspired the verse.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

RESOLUTION PASSED AT A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CHICAGO, BURLINGTON AND QUINCY RAILROAD, OCTOBER 18, 1898

Resolved, That the directors make this record for the purpose of giving expression to their great sorrow for the death of John M. Forbes, who died at his home in Milton, on the 12th of October; and to testify their appreciation of his high and uncompromising character and his uncommon qualities, which gave him the confidence and esteem of all who knew him. Taking part from the first, in the steps leading to the formation of this company, he was elected a director in 1857, served in that capacity continuously thereafter until his death, and was present for the last time at a meeting of the board on August 17, 1898. He was for more than forty years active in the affairs of the corporation, and to his far-seeing sagacity, his courage and energy, it owes a large measure of its success.

He was president of the company from 1878 to 1881, and has since that time been chairman of the board of directors. He was as wise in counsel as he was vigorous in action, and his sound judgment, ripened by experience, was never afraid, and seldom at fault.

He lived through a period of wide and rapid material development, to which he contributed in many ways, particularly as a pioneer in railroads beyond the Alleghany Mountains and the Great Lakes, and he was one of the last of those who were the leaders in giving form and impetus to the great railroad sys-

tems of the West. Among the first to see the possibilities of this development, he lived to share in its realization, and has left us at the age of eighty-five, after a long and useful life.

Adopted at a meeting of the directors of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad Company, October 18, 1898.

C. E. PERKINS, *President*.

APPENDIX B

MR. SEWARD'S FOREIGN POLICY

"It is a fashion with some men, including some good Republicans, who deplore Mr. Seward's course in our home politics, to talk of his successful management of our foreign affairs. It would be more agreeable to let our premier retire from public life without criticism, and with whatever glory his admiring friends may be disposed to bestow, but any great error in measuring him may react upon the choice soon to be made, or upon the action, of his successor, and it thus becomes a question of deep interest to the country whether Mr. Seward's policy ought to be imitated or avoided. We think that a little examination will show that we have kept out of European complications, not in consequence of Mr. Seward's management, but in spite of it; and we would now call attention to a few of the more prominent points of his administration.

"Immediately upon Mr. Lincoln's election in November, 1860, Mr. Seward was practically selected as secretary of state, and he thus had ample time to digest his plans and prepare for the great crisis that everybody knew must come in March, 1861. Next to vigor at home, it was perfectly clear that the most important point was to be properly represented abroad, and to do promptly whatever was possible to secure popular sympathy — and its actual consequence, neutrality of action — on the part of the European nations; and especially of England, where lay the greatest power to annoy us by furnishing ships and supplies to the rebels.

"Upon at least one subject, slavery, the sentiment of the

English masses, and of many of the governing classes, was sure to be with us, so long as our war was understood to be waged in the interests of freedom. Upon another subject the greatest jealousy had long existed there; namely, the fears of our design of annexing the British North American provinces. One of Mr. Seward's first strokes of policy was in an after-dinner — or public — speech not long before he came into office, when he referred to the acquisition of Canada as merely a question of time.

“The commonest foresight dictated the immediate replacement of Mr. Dallas, who represented our recent pro-slavery government, by a minister who would gather around him the support of all Englishmen who hated slavery. Instead of notifying Mr. Adams of his intended appointment, and dispatching him by the first steamer which sailed after the 4th of March, 1861, we find that Mr. Seward sent him to England about the middle of May, when the rebel emissaries had for months been using every means of personal and pecuniary influence; to say the least, totally unopposed by any voice. Mr. Motley, then by chance in Europe, alone made a stand for us. What wonder that Mr. Adams arrived to find the hasty declaration of beligerent rights just made by England and France? He thus landed almost in an enemy's country to begin at every disadvantage the long struggle with the English aristocratic government, which only ended when the news of the surrender at Appomattox reached the reluctant ears of the British ministry.

“Following this first great lapse in his administration, we next find Mr. Seward sending a circular to all our foreign ministers, practically, and almost in terms, informing the governments of Europe that slavery had nothing whatever to do with the rebellion. What his delay in sending abroad representatives of freedom had begun, this wretched attempt to conciliate the slaveholders completed. It fell like a pall upon our friends, and it was promptly seized upon by the sharp envoys of the rebels to prove that the North was only fighting for power, and that the people, and even the liberals of Europe, might well give their sympathies and their material aid to the weaker

party ; especially as the weaker party loudly promised cheap cotton and free trade, instead of sharp competition in both trade and manufactures, high tariffs, and annexation of British provinces.

“ This short-sighted, sixty day policy, of conciliating our enemies by disowning our friends, was next followed by Mr. Seward’s ill-timed and ill-judged offer to give up what has properly been called our militia of the sea, the right to use privateers against our enemies. Mr. Marcy had gone to the greatest length which public opinion would justify in offering to give up privateering — then our best offensive weapon — if the maritime powers would give up the right to seize any private property, except contraband of war, on the ocean. They, with their enormous navies, stood ready in case of war to destroy our commerce, and they had refused to give up the chance for prize money which was so dear to every naval hero. Will it now be believed that our astute Secretary of State hastened to offer this fatal concession, under the delusive idea that, if accepted, it would prevent the rebels from fitting out vessels in England against us ? Fortunately our ministers abroad were slower than their chief in completing this surrender, and our European enemies were blinder than we had any right to expect. They believed that we were already split asunder, and they did not catch at the offer ; which was finally withdrawn before they saw its significance. It will be noted that not a single privateer was fitted out against us abroad, and that all the mischief was done to our commerce by so-called Confederate ships of war, which would have been equally destructive had we given up our precious right to a militia on the sea. Any practical man would have foretold the result at the moment that this preposterous concession was offered. There is every reason to believe that our ministers abroad saw this, and of their own motion delayed in pushing the negotiation until wiser counsels prevailed at home, and they were allowed to withdraw it.

“ We come next to the Trent affair.¹ Mr. Seward’s final

¹ Apropos of this Mr. George Ashburner had written from England to my father on the 21st of December, 1861, “ Though I must

letter, backing out of the position we had taken, is considered adroit as accomplishing its end without entirely disgusting and disheartening our own people. We will admit that he proved himself skillful in backing out from the false position into which he had put himself. How much more adroit and statesmanlike it would have been to have resumed in the first place the old American ground for which we fought in 1812, and at once to have released the rebel emissaries, whom we had captured in conformity with British precedents and against our own! We should have equally accomplished our object by this straightforward course without the national humiliation and depression which was caused by yielding to the most degrading threats. Badly as Great Britain treated us on this occasion, she would have kicked us still harder had she found us stripped of the right of privateering, our sharpest offensive weapon against English commerce.

"This danger past, our next one grew out of the English cruisers sent out, and the ironclads preparing to go out, against us. When the English government made their one practical and fair proposal for averting this danger by offering to change their neutrality laws, which even if properly enforced were notoriously insufficient, Mr. Seward received the proposal so coolly that Lord Russell charged him with 'throwing cold water upon it,' and availed himself of this pretext for withdrawing it. Was this statesmanship? Any schoolboy could say I have throughout maintained that there would be no war on the Trent affair; still we all feel here that Seward's total want of statesmanship increases the danger of a misunderstanding greatly between the countries, and we greatly regret the accident which has placed a man like him, clever certainly but ignorant of the ideas of Europe, in charge of the foreign relations of the United States. His letters just published to the ministers in Europe have astonished the best friends of the United States here." But I ought to add that my father did have one thing to praise in Mr. Seward's conduct of this affair, viz., the redeeming humor of his offer to the British government, when about to send out troops to protect Canada, of a passage for these *viâ* Portland through Maine, as the nearest route to their destination. — ED.

see that it was an occasion to close at once with the offer, and if England had drawn back it would at least have put their government flagrantly in the wrong, instead of giving them a chance to throw the blame upon our cool reception of a fair offer. Giving all credit to the cool, dignified, and able course of Mr. Adams, we do neither him nor Mr. Seward any injustice when we insist that the diplomacy which really prevented the Laird ironclads from going to sea, and thus causing a rupture with England, came from the guns of Grant, Sherman, Thomas, and Farragut, from the cavalry charges of Sheridan, and from the indomitable spirit shown by our own people.

"We cannot close without giving Mr. Seward credit for one good point in his foreign policy. When our success knocked away the foundation of Maximilian's throne, and made the withdrawal of the French army from Mexico a foregone conclusion, Mr. Seward did prudently accept the situation, forbore to strike Napoleon in the face, and only assaulted him, and the national Treasury, by very long and (under the skillful manipulation of our minister to France, Mr. Bigelow) very harmless volumes of cable telegrams. He did not plunge us into a war with France, as Andrew Johnson, without him, might possibly have done.

"We here leave the subject of Mr. Seward's foreign policy, for there is no danger of the public's overrating the value of his untiring efforts to procure Alaska, St. Thomas, Samana Bay, Alta Vila, and Heaven knows what other polar, or tropical, accessions of territory; nor of their applauding his diplomacy in placing and keeping Reverdy Johnson in the post so worthily occupied by Mr. Adams."

INDEX

INDEX

- ABBOT, MRS. MARY, i. 57.**
Abolitionists, J. M. F.'s advice to,
 i. 174, 175; 237-240, 317; ii. 138,
 156-158.
Adams, Charles Francis, U. S. Min-
ister to London, i. 225, 233-235;
 his efforts to prevent sailing of
 Confederate cruisers, ii. 9, 32, 37,
 44, 45; letter to J. M. F., 56, 57;
 61, 85-87, 113; letter to J. M. F.
 about Meteor, 161, 162; 241, 244.
Adams, Mrs. C. F., i. 234.
Agassiz, Professor J. L. R., i. 8.
Alabama, the, Confederate cruiser,
 i. 340, 343; ii. 3, 12, 20, 25, 61-
 63, 72, 93, 98, 142, 151, 152, 160-
 162, 166-170, 171.
Alexander II., Czar of Russia, ii.
 159.
Alexandra, the, suspected Confeder-
ate gunboat, ii. 44-47.
Alsop, Robert, ii. 14.
Ames, Oakes, member of Committee
on Militia, i. 213.
Ampère, J. J., i. 246.
Anderson, Major Robert, command-
er of garrison at Fort Sumter, i.
 193, 194, 198; raises flag at Fort
 Sumter, ii. 138.
André, Major John, i. 330.
Andrew, John A., Governor of Massa-
chusetts, i. 8, 18, 33, 182; nomi-
 nates members of Peace Congress,
 188; 196; organizes and equips
 militia, 198, 203; moves troops
 South at outbreak of war, 205-210;
 arrangements for getting food to
 troops, 212-214; overwork, 226,
 227; 240-243, 258, 259, 288, 307;
 approves Loyal Publication Soci-
 ety, 326, 328; correspondence
 with J. M. F. on army reform,
 329-332; letter from J. M. F., ii.
 15, 16; in New York during draft
 riots, 49, 50; 57, 67, 68, 82-84,
 87, 96, 97; suggested as candi-
 date for Secretary of the Treas-
 ury, 121-124; consults J. M. F.
 as to future plans, 134-136; last
 letter to J. M. F. and death in
 1867, 162, 163; 210.
Andrew, John Forrester, ii. 210.
Anthony, Captain Caleb, i. 107; ii.
 50.
Anthony, Mrs. Caleb, i. 66.
Antietam, battle of, i. 334, 336; ii.
 110.
Apee, Chinese servant, i. 73.
Appleton, T. G., schoolmate of
J. M. F., i. 45.
Appleton, William, member of Con-
gress, i. 132-134, 168.
Argyle, Duke of, ii. 18.
Arthur, Chester A., nominated for
Vice-President at Chicago Con-
vention, ii. 194.
Ashburner, George, i. 140, 141, 161-
 163, 244, 245; letter as to Trent
 affair, 259, 260; ii. 33, 114, 115,
 242, 243.
Aspinwall, W. H., i. 193, 195-197,
 286, 287; goes with J. M. F. on
 mission to England, ii. 4-9, 20, 23,
 26, 31; correspondence concerning
 mission with Secretaries Chase
 and Welles, 40-48; returns to
 America, 48; 52, 64-66; letter
 from J. M. F., 117, 118.
Atkinson, Edward, letter from
J. M. F. about Educational Com-
mission, i. 309-313; member of
Loyal Publication Society, 328;
 ii. 90, 91.
Augur, General C. C., ii. 140.
Azores, voyage to, on yacht Ram-
bler, ii. 170-173.
Bacon, William B., goes to Beau-
fort with J. M. F., i. 296, 302, 303.
Baker, John I., member of Com-
mittee on Militia, i. 213.
Bancroft, George, historian; master

- at Round Hill School, i. 43; ii. 105.
- Bancroft, Captain Henry, of ship Logan, i. 69.
- Banks, General N. P., i. 345; ii. 227.
- Baring Bros. & Co., J. M. F.'s business relations with, i. 63; 90, 140; purchase breadstuffs for French government, 145; ii. 7-9, 41, 43, 64, 65, 98; suspend payment, 225.
- Baring, Edward, i. 141.
- Baring, Thomas, of Baring Bros. & Co., ii. 8, 9, 18, 35; letter from J. M. F., 55, 56; 91, 93, 94; letter to J. M. F. on finance, 131, 132.
- Barlow, General Francis C., wounded at battle of Gettysburg, ii. 69.
- Barney, —, collector at New York custom-house, ii. 49.
- Bates, Joshua, partner in Baring Bros. & Co., letter from J. M. F., i. 339, 340; ii. 8, 9; letter to J. M. F., 54, 55; 56, 63.
- Bates, Mrs. Joshua, i. 340.
- Beaufort, S. C., First Mass. Cavalry stationed at, i. 288; J. M. F.'s visits to, 293-303, 304-309; inadequacy of garrison, 314, 315.
- Beaumont, Gustave de, i. 246; ii. 138, 139; letter to J. M. F. on reconstruction, 147-150; 155.
- Beauregard, General P. G. T., i. 315.
- Beckwith, Arthur, ii. 213.
- Beckwith, Leonard F., ii. 213.
- Beckwith, N. M., partner in Russell & Co., i. 140, 172, 173, 287, 288; letter from J. M. F. on reconstruction, ii. 143, 144; 145.
- Beecher, Henry Ward, i. 285.
- Bellows, Rev. Dr. Henry W., head of Sanitary Commission, i. 265-273; 285.
- Bennet, Barbara, great-grandmother of J. M. F., i. 3.
- Bennet, Robert, ancestor of J. M. F., i. 2.
- Bennett, James Gordon, proprietor of "New York Herald," i. 244.
- Berkeley, "single speech," member of Parliament, ii. 32, 33.
- Bigelow, John, ii. 118, 119, 244.
- Blackadder, Rev. John, Scotch Covenanting preacher, i. 2.
- Blaine, James G., ii. 187; presidential campaign of 1880, 192-196; nominated as Republican candidate for President in 1884, 206; J. M. F.'s objections to, 207-209; 230, 231.
- Blair, Francis P., Sr., i. 190.
- Blair, General Francis P., i. 177.
- Blair, Montgomery, i. 190.
- Blake, Peter, fishman at Milton, i. 135.
- Blakeley, Captain, ii. 32.
- Bonaparte, Napoleon, ii. 74.
- Borden, Colonel Richard, transportation of troops, i. 207-209, 211.
- Boutwell, George S., member of Peace Congress, i. 188.
- Bowlegs, Billy, Indian chief, i. 135.
- Brackett, W. M., artist, ii. 164.
- Braithwaite, J. E., member of the Peace Society in England, ii. 10, 14.
- Breckinridge, John C., Vice-President, i. 198, 199.
- Breckinridge, —, ii. 109.
- Brigham, Colonel E. D., i. 214.
- Bright, John, supports the Union cause in England, ii. 3, 11, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20; letter to J. M. F., 52-54; 74, 77, 81, 108; letter to J. M. F. on reconstruction, 150, 151.
- Brimmer, Martin, member of Loyal Publication Society, i. 328; admiration for Governor Andrew, ii. 163.
- Bristow, B. H., Secretary of the Interior under Grant, ii. 187, 191.
- Brooks, J. W., civil engineer, i. 119; ii. 212.
- Brooks, Peter C., goes to Beaufort with J. M. F., i. 296, 302.
- Brough, John, Governor of Ohio, ii. 89.
- Brown, G. W., mayor of Baltimore, his loyalty, i. 189, 190.
- Brown, John, introduced to J. M. F. by S. G. Howe, i. 178; visits Milton, 179-182; his execution, 182; 239; ii. 63.
- Brownlow, Wm. Gannaway, "Parson Brownlow," i. 315.
- Brune, F. W., i. 189.
- Bryant & Sturgis, i. 59, 69.
- Bryant, Dr. Henry, i. 136.
- Bryant, William Cullen, editor of "New York Evening Post;" let-

- ter as to changes in cabinet, i. 236, 237; 241-244, 281, 282; opposes Stanton's order as to telegrams, 291; 325, 327, 335, 336; ii. 87, 101, 109, 110; letter from J. M. F. on finance, 145, 146.
- Bryan, W. J., candidate for presidency in 1896, ii. 190.
- Bryce, James, i. 8.
- Buchanan, President James, i. 151, 152, 154, 156-158, 169, 172, 192, 193, 199.
- Bull Run, battle of, i. 202, 203, 227, 238, 245, 246, 329, 332; ii. 89.
- Bulwer, E. Lytton, ii. 30.
- Burlingame, A., i. 225.
- Burnside, General A. E., i. 335, 345, 353.
- Butler, General Benjamin F., Governor of Massachusetts, J. M. F.'s objections to, i. 9; 33, 189, 207, 241, 345; ii. 89, 118, 185, 186; elected Governor of Massachusetts 203, 204; 208, 209.
- Byron, George Gordon, Lord, ii. 30.
- Cabot, Handasyd, clerk to J. M. F., i. 69; death in China, 72, 73.
- Cabot, J. Elliot, i. 3.
- Cabot, Samuel, managing partner in Perkins & Co., Boston, i. 54-56, 58-60, 69, 116, 117.
- Cabot, Colonel Stephen, commands armory in draft riots in Boston, ii. 50, 51, 54.
- Calhoun, J. C., i. 153, 253.
- California, trip to, ii. 176.
- Cameron, Senator J. D., supports Grant's candidacy, ii. 192, 193.
- Cameron, Kate, i. 1.
- Cameron, Simon, of Pennsylvania, i. 186; dissatisfaction with, 236, 237; 242-244.
- Canton, fire at, i. 76-80.
- Carnegie, Andrew, ironmaster, ii. 202.
- Cary, Mrs. E. M. (see also Forbes, Alice), ii. 236, 237.
- Cary, William F., commission merchant, i. 130, 294-297.
- Cedar Creek, battle of, ii. 113, 114.
- Chancellorsville, battle of, news received in England, ii. 17, 19, 37, 116.
- Chandler, T. P., member of Peace Congress, i. 188.
- Chandler, Senator W. E., supports J. G. Blaine, ii. 192, 195, 196.
- Chandler, Senator Z., i. 242; ii. 70.
- Channing, Rev. Dr. W. E., anti-slavery meeting at Faneuil Hall, i. 100; 247.
- Channing, Rev. W. H., i. 227.
- Chapman, Judge R. A., approval of Proclamation of Emancipation, i. 350, 352.
- Chase, S. P., Secretary of the Treasury, i. 8, 242; inflation of the currency, 275; 286, 287, 301, 338, 339, 346; sends J. M. F. and W. H. Aspinwall on mission to England, ii. 4, 5, 7; letters from J. M. F., 20, 21; 22, 31, 41-44, 86; appointed Chief Justice of Supreme Court, 119.
- Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad, see Railroads.
- China, first voyage to, i. 61; return home from, 65; second voyage to, 69; final return from, 87.
- Chowles, Rev. —, i. 67.
- Civil Service Reform, J. M. F.'s support of, ii. 187-189; 190, 209.
- Clarendon, Lord, ii. 26, 27.
- Clarke, James Freeman, visits Milton, i. 227.
- Cleveland, President Grover, i. 113; ii. 201, 202, 209.
- Cleveland, Captain Richard, captured in yacht Ariel, i. 113, 114.
- Cleveland, Mrs. Sarah, i. 113.
- Clifford, John H., i. 288, 289.
- Cobden, Richard, i. 8; supports the Union cause in England, ii. 3, 11, 15, 16, 18-20; speech in House of Commons, 36; 45, 93, 94, 108, 118.
- Cogswell, Joseph G., master at Round Hill School, Northampton, i. 43, 44, 46-52; opinion of J. M. F., 51; 56.
- Cole, Colonel, ii. 118.
- Colledge, Dr. and Mrs., friends of J. M. F., at Macao, i. 81.
- Conkling, Senator Roscoe, ii. 187, 196.
- Coolidge, Joseph, partner in Russell & Co., i. 72.
- Cooper, Peter, ii. 106, 133.
- Corning, Erastus, joins in purchasing Mich. Cent. Railroad, i. 119; 123, 124, 200, 201.

- Cover, J. C., U. S. Consul at Fayal, ii. 172.
- Cowper, J. Hamilton, correspondence with J. M. F. regarding differences between North and South, i. 147-158.
- Coxetter, Captain, commander of rebel privateer, i. 217.
- Crittenden, Senator John J., i. 191.
- Crowninshield, F. N., member of Peace Congress, i. 188.
- Cuba, trips to, i. 147; ii. 137.
- Cunningham, Edward, partner in Russell & Co., i. 165, 167-169.
- Cunningham, Mrs. Francis (see also Forbes, Mary A.), ii. 170.
- Cunningham, Captain John A., i. 137; commands Pembroke, 218.
- Cunningham, Loring, i. 137.
- Currency, inflation of, see Finances, National.
- Curtis, George William, i. 33, 326; ii. 88-90.
- Cushing, J. P., managing partner in Perkins & Co. in China, i. 37-39, 53; 57; merging of Perkins & Co. in Russell & Co., 61; 62, 70, 99.
- Dabney, Charles W., U. S. Consul at Fayal, ii. 171, 172.
- Dabney, J. P., ii. 171, 172.
- Dabney, Samuel, ii. 171, 172.
- Dahlgren, Admiral John A., ii. 16.
- Dallas, G. M., U. S. Minister to England, ii. 241.
- Dalton, Charles H., work on Sanitary Commission, i. 265.
- Dana, Charles, ii. 143.
- Dana, R. H., author of "Two Years Before the Mast," i. 65; draws up Bill for a Volunteer Navy, 227; ii. 87; delegate to Republican National Convention at Cincinnati, 187.
- Daniel, Mrs., i. 83.
- Davis, Jefferson, in U. S. Senate, i. 198; captured, ii. 148; 182.
- Dayton, W. L., U. S. Minister to France, ii. 118, 119.
- Delano, J. C., on commission to buy ships for navy, i. 228.
- Delano, Warren, with J. M. F. in China, i. 85.
- De Wolf, Dr. Oscar, assistant surgeon of First Cavalry, at Beaufort, i. 304; letter to Mrs. J. M. F., 322, 323.
- Dimmick, Colonel, commanding Fortress Monroe, i. 206; reinforced, 211.
- Dix, General John Adams: telegram to collector of Pensacola, i. 193; Governor of New York, 193; ii. 89.
- Dodge, Miss M. A., "Gail Hamilton," ii. 230, 231.
- Dorsey, Senator S. W., secretary of Republican National Committee, ii. 197, 198, 201.
- Douglas, S. A., i. 172, 173, 184.
- Dudley, Thomas H., U. S. Consul at Liverpool; efforts to stop sailing of Confederate cruisers, ii. 7-9, 25, 40, 46, 64; letter to J. M. F., 80; 155.
- Dumaresq, Captain P., i. 78; instructions as captain of Acbar, 101-105; 127.
- Dupont, Admiral Samuel F., i. 189; at Hilton Head, 307; ii. 23.
- Early, General J. A., Confederate, ii. 99.
- Edgeworth, Miss Maria, i. 71, 295.
- Educational Commission, the, i. 295, 296; prejudice against, 300, 301; 305; J. M. F.'s opinion of, 309-313.
- Eldridge, Captain John, i. 217.
- Eldridge, Captain Oliver, commands Atlantic, i. 169; commands State of Maine with troops bound South, 209-212; commands transport Atlantic, 294; visits Nau-shon, ii. 236.
- Eliot, Captain, stationed at Beaufort, i. 296.
- Eliot, T. Dawes, chairman of Naval Committee in House of Representatives: J. M. F.'s suggestions for volunteer navy, i. 221-224; 227.
- Eliot, Rev. Dr. W. G., enlists colored troops at St. Louis, i. 10; on Sanitary Commission, 264; ii. 155.
- Elliot, Captain Charles, afterwards Admiral, R. N., i. 83; ii. 27.
- Elliot, Mrs. Charles, i. 83.
- Ellis, Edward, M. P., ii. 31, 32.
- Emancipation, S. G. Howe's advocacy of, i. 238; J. M. F.'s opinion, 239, 240; 302, 315-318, 335;

- Proclamation of, 344-353; ii. 53, 73, 77, 78; Thirteenth Amendment passed, 133.
- Emerson, Edith, ii. 152. See also Forbes, Mrs. W. H.
- Emerson, Dr. Edward W., i. 28; ii. 111, 175.
- Emerson, Miss Ellen T., ii. 174, 175.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo, i. 8, 33; member of Saturday Club, 34, 36; letter to J. M. F., ii. 87, 88; 108, 109; visit to Naushon and extract from diary, 110-113; 152; letters to J. M. F., 174-176; goes to California with J. M. F., 176.
- Emerson, Mrs. R. W., ii. 174, 175.
- Endicott, William, Jr., treasurer of Loyal Publication Society, i. 328.
- England, trips to, i. 138-141, 168-170; J. M. F. and W. H. Aspinwall go on business of the government, ii. 4-48. See also Mission to England.
- Enrollment Bill, the, ii. 96, 97.
- Eustis, F. A., i. 296.
- Evans, Thomas, ii. 14.
- Evans, William, ii. 19; visits America, 76; correspondence with J. M. F., 77, 78; 80, 81.
- Evarts, William M., i. 324; ii. 47, 64, 80, 118, 192.
- Everett, Edward, i. 33; ii. 87, 119.
- Faneuil Hall, anti-slavery meeting in, i. 100; other meetings, ii. 143, 147, 188.
- Farragut, Admiral D. G., ii. 121, 244.
- Farrandsville, Pennsylvania, trip to, i. 91-97.
- Faucon, Captain E. H., commands Fearnot, i. 228.
- Fay, Joseph S., ii. 98.
- Felton, S. M., president of Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad, i. 189, 206.
- Fessenden, General Francis, ii. 99.
- Fessenden, William, ii. 165.
- Fessenden, William Pitt, i. 8; chairman of Ways and Means Committee of Senate, 277-281; correspondence with J. M. F. on public affairs, 336-338; 344; letter from J. M. F. on pay of colored troops, ii. 81-83; 99, 100, 107, 108; appointed Secretary of the Treasury, 119; letter from J. M. F., 120-122; 125, 163; correspondence with J. M. F., 164-166; death, 166.
- Finances, National; opposition to inflation of currency, i. 275-284; 286-288; ii. 107, 108, 126; letter from Thomas Baring, 131, 132; 142; letters from J. M. F. and H. McCulloch, 143-147; 184, 185; Bland Silver Bill, 190, 191.
- Fish, Hamilton, Secretary of State, letter from J. M. F., ii. 171, 172.
- Fisher, Warren, ii. 207.
- Florida, trips to, i. 134-137, 147; ii. 176, 177.
- Forbes, Alice H., daughter of J. M. F., i. 110, 168, 169, 294, 298; ii. 49, 50, 137, 138, 170, 174. See also Cary, Mrs. E. M.
- Forbes, Cornelia Frances, sister of J. M. F., i. 42, 47.
- Forbes, Ellen R., daughter of J. M. F., i. 110, 168, 169; death of, 185.
- Forbes, Emma P., sister of J. M. F., i. 40, 47, 50, 56, 66.
- Forbes, John, grandfather of J. M. F., i. 3.
- Forbes, General John, ii. 33.
- Forbes, Mrs. J. G., aunt of J. M. F., i. 66.
- Forbes, J. Malcolm, son of J. M. F., i. 43, 90, 138-141, 147, 299; ii. 103, 152-154.
- Forbes, John Murray, Introductory chapter: ancestry, i. 1; personal characteristics, 2-34; life at Naushon, 16-27; golden wedding celebration, 28; poem by O. W. Holmes on eightieth birthday, 35. Birth in Bordeaux and voyage to the U. S., 38; childhood, 40; first mercantile ventures, 42; Franklin Academy, Andover, 43; Round Hill School, Northampton, 43-52; enters counting-house of J. & T. H. Perkins in Boston, 53; death of his brother, T. T. Forbes, 60; first voyage to China, 61; business relations with Houqua, 62; clerk in office of Russell & Co. at Canton, 62; return home, 65; first meeting with Miss Sarah Hathaway, 66; engagement and marriage, 67; second voyage to China, 69; partner in firm of

Russell & Co., 72; death of Handasyd Cabot, 72; trip to Manila, 73-76; fire at Canton, 76-80; first mention of railroads, 81; farewell ball at Macao, 81-84; Union Club, Canton, 86; voyage home, 87-89; commercial panic, 90, 91; care of his brother R. B. Forbes's affairs and trip to Farrandsville, Pa., 91-97; continued business relations with Houqua, 98, 99; effect of hearing Wendell Phillips's speech at Faneuil Hall, 100; mercantile affairs and instructions to Captain P. Dumaesq, 100-105; tree-planting at Milton and Naushon, 105, 106; birth of daughters Alice and Ellen, 110; birth of son William, 111; death of brother-in-law William Hathaway, 111, 112; trial trip of schooner Ariel, 112-115; China merchants' suggestions as to mission to China, 115; views on profits and expenditure of merchants, 115-117; leaves Whig party, 118; first interest in railroads, 118; Michigan Central R. R., 119; expedition of Jamestown to relieve Irish famine, 121; interest in iron property at Mount Savage, 121, 122; practical joke on Dr. Edward Robbins, 123-126; advice to commission merchant in San Francisco, 127-132; builds ships for California trade, 132; first trip to Florida, 134-137; beginnings of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy and the Hannibal and St. Joseph railroads, 138; first trip to England, 138-141; letter to N. W. Senior on differences between North and South, 142; buys breadstuffs for French government, 145-147; trip to Florida and Cuba, 147; correspondence with J. H. Cowper, 148-158; joins W. W. Swain in buying the island of Naushon, 159; decrease of mercantile and increase of railroad interests, 160; letter to E. Cunningham on financial panic of 1857, 167; trip to England (and France) to negotiate loan for Mich. Cent. Railroad, 168-170; growing interest in politics and

support of the Republican party, 171; advice to Wendell Phillips and others, 174; letter to son at college, 175; receives visit from John Brown, 179-182; first acquaintance with John A. Andrew, 182; appointed elector at large at Lincoln's election, 183; opinion of Lincoln, 183; threatening war-cloud, 185; member of Peace Congress, 187-201; plans for relief of Fort Sumter, 193-198; opening of the war, 201; withdraws merchant ships from Southern ports, 204; helps Governor Andrew in arrangements for moving troops South, 205-212; does work of deputy commissary, 212-214; buys ships for transports, 215-218; urges formation of volunteer navy, 219-225; recommends appointment of Lothrop Motley as Minister to Vienna, 225; battle of Bull Run, 227; Bill for a Volunteer Navy, 227, 228; buys merchant ships for navy, 228-233; correspondence with C. F. Adams, W. C. Bryant, S. G. Howe, and N. W. Senior on public affairs, 233-257; eldest son receives commission in First Mass. Cavalry, 258, 259; interest in the Trent affair, 259-263; organization of the Sanitary Commission and correspondence with F. L. Olmsted and Dr. H. W. Bellows, 263-274; interest in, and correspondence about, national finances, 275-284; advocates severe treatment of spies and slavers, 285; letters to W. H. Aspinwall, N. M. Beckwith, J. H. Clifford, G. Ripley, and W. C. Bryant on finance and other public affairs, 286-291; charters vessels for Navy Department, 292, 293; taken ill, goes to Beaufort to be near his son, 293-303; writes to Charles Sumner as to Educational Commission and the negro question, 300-302; returns home, 303, 304; second trip to Beaufort with his wife, 304-308; writes to Edward Atkinson as to Educational Commission, 309-313; letters on public affairs to Parke Godwin, C. B. Sedgwick,

and Charles Sumner, and from C. B. Sedgwick, 314-322; helps raise colored regiments, 323, 324; starts the N. E. Loyal Publication Society: letters to W. C. Noyes, 324-329; correspondence with Governor Andrew on army reform, 329-332; difficulties of recruiting, 333-334; letters on public affairs from W. C. Bryant, W. P. Fessenden, G. V. Fox, and C. B. Sedgwick, and to W. P. Fessenden and Joshua Bates, 335-346; draws up address of electors to the President urging Proclamation of Emancipation, 344, 347, 348; correspondence with Charles Sumner as to Proclamation, 348-353; sent by Secretaries of State and Navy on private mission to England with W. H. Aspinwall, ii. 4; gets loan for U. S. government from Baring Bros. & Co., 8, 9; appeals to English Quakers in the cause of peace, 10-15; writes to Governor Andrew about ironclads and guns, 15, 16; correspondence on objects of the mission with S. P. Chase, Gideon Welles, and G. V. Fox, 20-26; letter from Mrs. Fanny Kemble, 26, 27; goes to Germany and France, 28-31; hears Cobden speak in the House of Commons, 36; letters to Secretaries Chase and Welles concerning the mission, 40-48; returns to New York just before the draft riots, 48; letters on public affairs from Mrs. Fanny Kemble, John Bright, Joshua Bates, and C. F. Adams, and to Thomas Baring, Charles Sumner, Wm. Rathbone, Jr., and Joshua Bates, 51-63; results of mission to England and letter from Secretary Welles, 63-66; interest in enlistment of colored troops and education of negroes, 67-71; joins in building S. S. Meteor, 72; letter to President Lincoln on public matters, 73-75; visits camp of Second Mass. Cavalry, 76; correspondence with William Evans, 77, 78; letters on public affairs to W. P. Fessenden, and from C. B. Sedgwick and C. F. Adams, 81-87; Saturday Club

dinner on Shakspeare anniversary, and letter from R. W. Emerson, 87, 88; letter to G. W. Curtis on Lincoln's renomination, 89, 90; letters from William Rathbone about Confederate ironclads, 91-95; enrollment of colored troops, and letter from C. B. Sedgwick 96, 97; capture and imprisonment of his son William, 97-99; letter to W. P. Fessenden on letters of marque, 99-100; letters as to Lincoln campaign, etc., from C. B. Sedgwick, W. C. Bryant, and G. V. Fox, and to G. V. Fox and W. P. Fessenden, 101-105; Lincoln meeting at Cooper Institute, 106; letter to W. P. Fessenden on currency, 107, 108; visit of Goldwin Smith, Emerson, and others to Naushon, 108-112; death of Colonel C. R. Lowell, 113-115; letters on public affairs to W. H. Aspinwall and W. P. Fessenden, and from Charles Sumner and Governor Andrew, 117-124; goes to Washington with his family for the winter of 1864-65, 125; letter from Thomas Baring on finance, 131, 132; efforts to raise money for government, 133; advocates opening of Southern ports, 134; correspondence with Governor Andrew, 134-136; trip to Fortress Monroe with G. V. Fox, 137; trip to Cuba, 137; witnesses raising of flag at Fort Sumter, 138; correspondence with G. de Beaumont, 138, 139; grand review at Washington, 140, 141; difficulties of reconstruction, letters to N. M. Beckwith and W. C. Bryant, and from H. McCulloch, G. de Beaumont, and John Bright, 141-151; letter from Goldwin Smith on Alabama case, etc., 151, 152; marriage of his son William, 152, 154; correspondence with Wendell Phillips, 156-159; letter from O. W. Holmes, 159, 160; difficulties as to S. S. Meteor: letter from C. F. Adams, 160-162; last letter from Governor Andrew, 162, 163; correspondence with W. P. Fessenden, 164-166; letter to Mrs. N. J. Senior on Alabama claims, 167-

- 170; voyage in yacht *Rambler* to Azores, 170-173; letter to Hamilton Fish, 171, 172; letters from R. W. Emerson, and trip, accompanied by him and others, to California, 174-176; trip to Florida, 176, 177; chosen Republican elector at large, 178; letter to Charles Sumner on political campaign of 1872, 178-183; undiminished interest in politics: letter to President Grant, 184-186; appointed delegate at large to the Cincinnati Republican National Convention, 187; speech at Faneuil Hall on Civil Service Reform, 188-190; Republican National Convention at Chicago and nomination of Garfield, 193-198; notes on proper use of campaign funds, 199-202; opposition to Benjamin Butler, 203-204; approval of women's suffrage, 205; reasons for leaving the Republican party, 206-210; letter from Judge Hoar, 210-211; railroad work, 211-217; interest in shipping and advocacy of tariff reform, 219-222; letter from William Rathbone on free trade, 223, 224; continued interest in railroads, 224, 225; letters from Mrs. Fanny Kemble, J. G. Whittier, and Judge Hoar, 226-230; building of yacht *Wild Duck*, 231; last summers at Naushton, 234-237; death at Milton, October 12, 1898, 237.
- Forbes, Mrs. J. M. (see also Hathaway, Sarah), i. 67, 69, 76, 89, 90, 111, 112, 132, 159, 188, 235, 294-299; visit to Beaufort, 304-306; letter from Dr. De Wolf, 322, 323; ii. 9; letter from J. M. F., 28; in New York during the draft riots, 49, 50; 114, 115; goes to Washington for the winter, 125; 174, 177, 232, 236, 237.
- Forbes, John Murray, U. S. Consul at Buenos Ayres, i. 40.
- Forbes, Mary A., sister of J. M. F., i. 42, 47, 65, 66. See also Cunningham, Mrs. Francis.
- Forbes, Mary Hathaway, daughter of J. M. F., i. 188, 295; marries Colonel H. S. Russell, ii. 4. See also Russell, Mrs. H. S.
- Forbes, Paul Sieman, i. 294, 295.
- Forbes, Ralph Bennet, father of J. M. F., i. 3, 37-39, 41.
- Forbes, Mrs. R. B., mother of J. M. F. (see also Perkins, Margaret), i. 37-41, 46-48, 50-52, 56, 57, 59, 65, 69, 73.
- Forbes, Robert, i. 1.
- Forbes, R. B., brother of J. M. F., i. 39, 41, 42, 47, 60, 61, 64, 65, 81, 90, 91, 97, 102-106, 111, 112-115, 118; commands Jamestown, 121; 159, 206, 218; ii. 93, 94, 161, 219, 220.
- Forbes, Sarah, daughter of J. M. F., i. 139, 295; ii. 172, 173, 176, 177. See also Hughes, Mrs. W. H.
- Forbes, Thomas Tunno, brother of J. M. F., i. 39, 41, 42, 47-51, 53, 56-59; death in China, 60-62.
- Forbes, William Hathaway, son of J. M. F., i. 43, 111, 134-137, 138-141; appointed lieutenant in First Mass. Cavalry, 258, 259; goes to Beaufort, 283, 284; 288; visited by J. M. F., 293-306; 323; ii. 39, 51, 76; taken prisoner, 97-99; 103, 109, 118; at home on parole and then exchanged, 125; resigns commission at end of war, 141; marries Miss Edith Emerson, 152; 170, 176, 177, 217; death in 1897, 235.
- Forbes, Mrs. W. H. (see also Emerson, Edith), ii. 152.
- Forster, Joshua, ii. 14.
- Forster, Robert, member of Peace Society in England, ii. 10, 14.
- Forester, W. E., ii. 11, 18, 45, 93.
- Fortress Monroe, poorly garrisoned, i. 206, 207, 210; relief of, 211; 304; ii. 117, 137, 235.
- Fort Sumter, straits of garrison, i. 193; plans for the relief of, 193-198; fall of, 198; 202, 204, 205, 254, 290, 303, 343; ii. 4, 23, 105; raising of the flag, 138, 139.
- Fox, Gustavus V., experienced naval officer, plans for relief of Fort Sumter, i. 193-198; Assistant Secretary of Navy, purchase of vessels for navy, 228-232; 289-290; letters to J. M. F. as to ironclads, etc., 340-343; letters to J. M. F., ii. 22, 23, 98, 99; letter from J. M. F., 102-104; 105, 117; trip down

- Potomac with J. M. F., 137; goes to Russia, 159, 160; death in 1883, 204, 205.
- France, trips to, i. 169; ii. 31.
- Franklin, Captain W. H., of Pennsylvania, in charge of Capitol extension, i. 200.
- "Free-Soilers," the, i. 171, 177, 180, 181, 183.
- Fremont, General John C., i. 151, 169, 170, 173, 321; ii. 89.
- Fry, Richard, ii. 14.
- Frye, Senator William P., supports J. G. Blaine, ii. 192, 195.
- Gardner, John L., ii. 217.
- Garfield, President J. A., ii. 190; campaign of 1880, 192-198.
- Garrison, William Lloyd, ii. 156.
- Germany, J. M. F.'s visit to, ii. 28-31.
- "Gideonites," the, see Educational Commission.
- Gilman, Captain, of ship *Lintin*, i. 102.
- Gladstone, William E., ii. 18.
- Godkin, E. L., editor of "*Nation*," ii. 144.
- Godwin, Parke, editor of "*New York Evening Post*," letter from J. M. F., i. 314, 315.
- Goldsborough, Admiral L. M., at Fortress Monroe, i. 304.
- Goodrich, J. Z., member of Peace Congress, i. 188.
- Gordon, Captain N. P., of the slaver *Erie*, captured and executed, i. 285.
- Grant, General U. S., appointed Lieutenant-General, i. 335; 336; ii. 70; his success in commanding the army, 72, 73, 88, 99, 102; his reticence, 117, 118; 121, 128; grand review at Washington, 140; election to the Presidency, 166; 167, 178, 184-187; candidate for reelection, 190-195; 211, 244.
- Gray, Horace, i. 208.
- Gray, Miss I., work on Sanitary Commission, i. 265.
- Gray, William, opposes inflation of the currency, i. 276, 279, 286; ii. 83.
- Greeley, Horace, ii. 102; Democratic nominee for President, 178, 179, 182, 183; 208.
- Green, David A., merchant and shipowner, i. 229.
- Green, J. C., partner in Russell & Co., i. 71, 72, 78, 87, 98; joins in purchase of Mich. Cent. Railroad, 119; ii. 133.
- Greene, Hugh W., member of Committee on Militia, i. 213.
- Grimes, Senator James W., i. 321; ii. 125, 163, 164, 166.
- Grinnell, Moses H., i. 225.
- Griswold, George, joins in purchase of Mich. Cent. Railroad, i. 119.
- Hale, Rev. E. E., member of Loyal Publication Society, i. 328.
- Hale, E. J., partner of J. M. F., i. 204, 219.
- Hale, Senator Eugene, supports J. G. Blaine, ii. 192, 195.
- Hale, William A., ii. 235.
- Hallowell, Colonel N. P., commands colored regiment, i. 324; ii. 50.
- Hamilton, Alexander, ii. 120.
- Hampton, Wade, ii. 182.
- Harper's Ferry, John Brown's capture at, i. 182.
- Harrison, President Benjamin, ii. 202.
- Harrison, William Henry, ex-President, i. 184.
- Hatch, Miss Mattie, i. 55.
- Hathaway, Charles, i. 169.
- Hathaway, Francis, trip to Manila with J. M. F., i. 72-76; in China, 80, 81.
- Hathaway, Mary (afterwards Mrs. R. S. Watson), sister of Mrs. J. M. F., i. 65, 66.
- Hathaway, Sarah, i. 65-67. See also Forbes, Mrs. J. M.
- Hathaway, William, brother of Mrs. J. M. F., i. 111, 112.
- Hay, John, private secretary to President Lincoln, letter to J. M. F., ii. 76.
- Hayes, President R. B., ii. 186; presidential campaign of 1876, 187-192.
- Hayward, J. T., bookkeeper in Perkins & Co., i. 54, 55, 64.
- Heard, Augustine, managing partner in Russell & Co. at Canton, i. 61-64, 71, 72, 76; goes to Beaufort, S. C., 295-303.
- Hemenway, Augustus, ii. 176.

- Hentz, —, master at Round Hill School, i. 49.
- Herbert, H. A., Secretary of the Navy under Cleveland, ii. 231.
- Higginson, Major Henry L., quartered at Hilton Head, i. 303.
- Hoar, Judge E. R., member of Saturday Club, i. 34; delegate to Republican National Convention at Cincinnati, ii. 187; letters to J. M. F., 203, 210, 211, 227-230.
- Hoar, Senator G. F., chairman of Republican Convention at Chicago, ii. 193-196.
- Hoar, Samuel, ii. 211.
- Holmes, Oliver Wendell, member of Saturday Club, poem on J. M. F.'s eightieth birthday, i. 34, 35; letter to J. M. F. about ode to Czar of Russia, ii. 159, 160.
- Hooker, General Joseph, i. 335; ii. 15.
- Hooper, Edward W., on Educational Commission, i. 296.
- Hooper, Samuel, i. 339; ii. 156.
- Hopkins, General —, i. 134-136.
- Horses:
- " Billy," i. 297-299; ii. 109, 110.
- " Johnny Crapaud," i. 17, 107-111.
- " The Judge " and Di," i. 106, 107.
- Horton, Valentine B., i. 317.
- Houghton, Lord, see Monckton Milnes.
- Houqua, Chinese merchant, business relations with J. M. F., i. 62, 63, 72, 77-80, 98, 99, 101.
- Howe, Mrs. Julia Ward, ii. 237.
- Howe, S. G.: letters introducing John Brown to J. M. F., i. 178, 179; advocates emancipation, 238-240.
- Howe, Mrs. Samuel, i. 4, 50.
- Howland, Matthew, ii. 14.
- Hudson, Commodore William L., at the head of Charlestown Navy Yard, i. 215, 216; buys ships for navy, 228, 229.
- Hughes, Thomas, ii. 38, 106, 192.
- Hughes, W. H., ii. 235, 237.
- Hughes, Mrs. W. H. (see also Forbes, Sarah), letters from Edward Atkinson and William Rathbone about J. M. F., ii. 90-95.
- Hunt, William M., i. 32; meets John Brown at Milton, 179; ii. 177.
- Hunter, General David, commanding at Hilton Head, i. 303; enlists colored soldiers, 307, 308; 317.
- Inflation of currency, see Finances, National.
- Inglis, —, i. 83.
- Institute of Technology, J. M. F.'s interest in, i. 14, 16.
- Irish famine, expedition of Jamestown, i. 120, 121.
- Ironclads, the Laird, i. 340-343; ii. 4-8, 12, 13, 16, 21, 23, 46, 47, 55, 56, 58, 64, 80, 91, 92-94, 243, 245.
- Irving, Washington, i. 225.
- Jackson, President Andrew, ii. 188, 189.
- Jackson, Thomas Jonathan, Confederate general, ii. 18.
- Jarnegan, Captain, i. 135.
- Jefferson Proviso, the, i. 153.
- Jennison, Dr. John, fellow-passenger of J. M. F. on voyage to China, i. 61.
- Jewell, Marshall, ex-Governor of Connecticut, ii. 195; chairman of National Republican Committee, 196-198.
- Johnson, President Andrew: grand review at Washington, ii. 140; 143, 144, 147, 150, 155, 163, 179, 244.
- Johnson, Reverdy, ii. 244.
- Johnston, General J. E., Confederate, ii. 182.
- Joy, James F., i. 168, 242; ii. 212.
- Kearney, Denis, ii. 208.
- Kearsarge, the, ii. 72.
- Kelly, John, ii. 208.
- Kelly, Judge William, i. 345.
- Kemble, Charles, i. 31.
- Kemble, Mrs. Fanny, i. 31, 32, 66; letters to J. M. F., ii. 26, 27, 51, 52, 226, 231, 232.
- Keyes, Colonel E. D., aide to General Scott, i. 196, 197, 206, 207.
- Keyes, John, ii. 174.
- Kimber, Thomas, Jr., ii. 14.
- King, Preston, i. 346.
- Knapp, Rev. F. N., work on Sanitary Commission, i. 265.
- Ku-Klux Klan, the, secret society, ii. 178, 179, 189, 233.

- Laird, William, builder of ironclads for Confederates, i. 340; ii. 4, 25, 44, 56, 80, 91, 92-94, 244.
- Lawrence, Amos A., works at recruiting with J. M. F., i. 333, 334.
- Lee, Colonel F. L., ii. 218.
- Lee, Colonel Henry, on Governor Andrew's staff, i. 208; ii. 192, 218, 219.
- Lee, General Robert E., captures John Brown at Harper's Ferry, i. 182; 336; ii. 98, 127, 130; his surrender, 138.
- Lee, Captain W. P., of S. S. Pembroke: J. M. F.'s instructions, i. 217, 218.
- Lee, Colonel W. Raymond, imprisoned at Richmond, i. 259.
- Legal Tender, see Finances, National.
- Letters, and quotations from letters; see also Telegrams:
- From J. M. Forbes to —
- Adams, Charles Francis, i. 233.
- Andrew, Governor J. A., i. 212, 258, 329; ii. 15, 136.
- Andrew, J. Forrester, ii. 210.
- Appleton, William, i. 133.
- Ashburner, George, i. 161, 245; ii. 114.
- Aspinwall, W. H., i. 286; ii. 117.
- Atkinson, Edward, i. 309.
- Baring, Thomas, ii. 55.
- Bates, Joshua, i. 339; ii. 63.
- Beaumont, Gustave de, ii. 138.
- Beckwith, N. M., i. 172, 287; ii. 143.
- Bellows, Rev. Dr. Henry W., i. 270.
- Bryant, W. C., i. 241, 281, 282, 291; ii. 146.
- Chairman of Mass. Independents, ii. 207.
- Chase, S. P., ii. 20, 21, 41, 43.
- Clifford, John H., i. 288.
- Cooper, Peter, ii. 133.
- Cowper, J. Hamilton, i. 152.
- Cunningham, Edward, i. 167.
- Curtis, George W., ii. 89.
- Dumaresq, Captain P., i. 102.
- Eliot, T. Dawes, i. 221.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo, ii. 109.
- Evans, William, ii. 77.
- Fessenden, W. P., i. 277, 279, 283, 338; ii. 81, 99, 107, 120, 164.
- Fish, Hamilton, ii. 171.
- Forbes, J. Malcolm, i. 138.
- Forbes, Mrs. J. M., i. 294; ii. 28.
- Forbes, R. B., i. 81, 111.
- Forbes, Mrs. Ralph Bennet, i. 46.
- Forbes, Sarah, ii. 172, 176.
- Forbes, T. T., i. 42, 48, 49, 56, 58.
- Forbes, W. H., i. 134, 138.
- Fox, G. V., i. 228, 229; ii. 102.
- Godwin, Parke, i. 314.
- Grant, President U. S., ii. 186.
- Grinnell, Moses H., i. 225.
- Howe, S. G., i. 239.
- Lee, Captain W. P., i. 217.
- Lincoln, Abraham, ii. 73.
- Low, A. A., ii. 134.
- Matthews, Captain, i. 216.
- "New York Evening Post," i. 219, 285.
- Noyes, W. Curtis, i. 324, 326.
- Olmsted, F. L., i. 269, 273.
- Phillips, Wendell, ii. 157.
- Quakers, English, ii. 10.
- Rathbone, William, Jr., ii. 59.
- Ripley, George, i. 289.
- Scott, General Winfield, i. 226.
- Sedgwick, Charles B., i. 315, 316, 319; ii. 1.
- Senior, Mrs. Nassau J., ii. 38, 167.
- Senior, Nassau W., i. 142, 183, 247, 253, 260.
- Seward, W. H., i. 220.
- Son, i. 175.
- Sturgis, Russell, i. 145.
- Sumner, Charles, i. 300, 317, 318, 349; ii. 58, 178.
- Welles, Gideon, ii. 21, 40, 44-46, 64.
- Whittier, John G., ii. 203.
- To J. M. Forbes from —
- Adams, Charles Francis, i. 234; ii. 56, 85, 113, 161.
- Andrew, Governor J. A., i. 214, 331; ii. 122, 134, 162.
- Ashburner, George, i. 259; ii. 242.
- Baring, Thomas, ii. 131.
- Bates, Joshua, ii. 54.
- Beaumont, Gustave de, ii. 139, 147.
- Bellows, Dr. Henry W., i. 267.
- Bright, John, ii. 52, 150.
- Brimmer, Martin, ii. 163.
- Bryant, W. C., i. 236, 242, 335; ii. 101.

- Chase, S. P., ii. 42.
 Cowper, J. Hamilton, i. 148.
 Curtis, G. W., ii. 88, 90.
 Dudley, Thomas H., ii. 80.
 Eliot, Rev. Dr. W. G., ii. 155.
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo, ii. 87, 174, 175.
 Evans, William, ii. 78, 80.
 Fessenden, W. P., i. 336; ii. 165.
 Fox, G. V., i. 231, 340-342; ii. 22, 99, 104.
 Hay, John, ii. 76.
 Hoar, Judge E. R., ii. 203, 210.
 Holmes, O. W., ii. 159.
 Hooper, Samuel, ii. 156.
 Houqua, i. 98, 99.
 Howe, S. G., i. 178, 179, 238.
 Hughes, Thomas, ii. 192.
 Kemble, Mrs. Fanny, ii. 26, 51, 226, 231.
 Lee, Henry, ii. 192, 218.
 Lowell, James Russell, ii. 85.
 McCulloch, Hugh, ii. 145, 146.
 Olmsted, F. L., i. 265.
 Phillips, Wendell, ii. 156.
 Rathbone, William, Jr., ii. 91, 92, 223.
 Robbins, Dr. E. H., i. 124, 125.
 Sedgwick, Charles B., i. 308, 320, 344; ii. 83, 96, 101, 107, 156.
 Senior, Nassau W., i. 245, 251.
 Sheridan, General P. H., ii. 113.
 Smith, Goldwin, ii. 108, 132, 151.
 Stanton, Edwin M., ii. 69.
 Sturgis, William, i. 165.
 Sumner, Charles, i. 186, 348, 352; ii. 84, 119, 187.
 Tocqueville, Madame Alexis de, i. 185.
 Ward, George C., ii. 133.
 Welles, Gideon, i. 292; ii. 5, 23, 65.
 Whittier, John G., ii. 88, 226.
 From —
 Atkinson, Edward, to Mrs. W. H. Hughes, ii. 90.
 Cogswell, Joseph G., to Mrs. R. B. Forbes, i. 51, 52.
 De Wolf, Dr. Oscar, to Mrs. J. M. Forbes, i. 322.
 Electors, Presidential, to Abraham Lincoln, i. 347.
 Hunter, General David, to E. M. Stanton, i. 308.
 Lowell, Colonel C. R., to Mrs. C. R. Lowell, ii. 116.
 Rathbone, William, to Mrs. W. H. Hughes, ii. 92.
 Sturgis, William, to J. P. Cushing, i. 37.
 Letters of marque, i. 218; ii. 21, 25, 100.
 Lewis, George Cornwall, ii. 26.
 Lincoln, Abraham, i. 18; chosen President, 182-185; plot to attack him in Baltimore, 189; 191, 197-199, 236, 237, 242, 243, 267, 268, 308, 309, 314, 315, 317, 329, 332; appoints U. S. Grant Lieutenant-General, 335; 336-338, 343-346; letter from electors urging Proclamation of Emancipation, 347, 348; 349, 353; ii. 59; letter from J. M. F., 73-75; 76-78, 84, 85; campaign of 1864, 88-90, 101-105, 117; 119, 134; second inauguration, 136; assassinated, 138; 147, 227, 240.
 Logan, General John A., at Cincinnati Convention, i. 33; ii. 196.
 Lonero, Captain, i. 84.
 Longfellow, H. W., member of Saturday Club, i. 34; ii. 87, 236.
 Low, A. A., ii. 134.
 Lowell, Miss Anna, i. 322.
 Lowell, Charles Russell, clerk in J. M. Forbes & Co., goes to Florida and Cuba with J. M. F., i. 147; commands Second Mass. Cavalry, ii. 76, 97, 109; killed at Cedar Creek, 113-117; 164.
 Lowell, Mrs. Charles Russell, ii. 115-117.
 Lowell, James Russell, member of Saturday Club, i. 34; ii. 2, 85, 113.
 Lovejoy, Elijah P., indignation meeting after the murder of, i. 99, 100.
 Loyal Publication Society, see New England Loyal Publication Society.
 Lyman, Mrs. A. J., i. 4.
 Mack, Thomas, i. 296.
 Mallory, S. R., Confederate Secretary of the Navy, i. 321.
 Manila, trip to, i. 73-76.
 Manly, W., trip to Farrandville with J. M. F., i. 94-97.

- Marey, Governor William L., i. 233; ii. 189, 242.
 Martineau, Rev. James, ii. 17.
 Mason, James M., Confederate ambassador, i. 245; seizure of, 259; 284; ii. 36.
 Massachusetts, S. S., i. 118.
 Matthews, Captain, commanding S. S. Cambridge, J. M. F.'s instructions to, i. 216, 217.
 Maximilian, Archduke of Austria and titular Emperor of Mexico, ii. 244.
 May, Miss Abby, work on Sanitary Commission, i. 265.
 McClellan, General George B.: reorganization of Medical Bureau, i. 267; prepares for movement on Richmond, 304; 332, 336; ii. 89, 96, 103.
 McCulloch, Hugh, Secretary of the Treasury, ii. 124, 125, 133, 134, 143; letter on finance to J. M. F., 145; 146, 147.
 McLean, John, i. 173.
 Meade, General George G., ii. 55.
 Medical Bureau, bill for reorganization of, i. 267-269, 271-274.
 Meigs, General M. C., i. 332.
 Mellus, Mrs., i. 55.
 Merchant marine compared with navy, i. 221-224.
 Merrimac, frigate, i. 212, 304; ii. 99.
 Merritt, General Wesley: grand review at Washington, ii. 141.
 Meteor, the, subscriptions for building, ii. 72; 157, 160-162.
 Michigan Central Railroad, see Railroads.
 Mills, J. K. & Co., failure of, i. 167.
 Milnes, Monckton, afterwards Lord Houghton, supports Union cause in England, ii. 11, 37.
 Mission to England, ii. 4-48, 55, 64-66.
 Missouri Compromise, the, i. 153, 154.
 Monitor, the, i. 304.
 Monroe, Fortress, see Fortress Monroe.
 Morey, —, presidential elector, i. 350.
 Morrill Tariff, the, i. 243, 249, 250.
 Morris, Captain, i. 204.
 Mosby, Colonel J. S., ii. 97, 98, 110.
 Motley, J. Lothrop, author of "Dutch Republic," i. 220, 225; ii. 241.
 Motley, Thomas, at Beaufort, S. C., i. 306.
 Mount Savage, ironworks at, i. 121, 122.
 Mulligan, James, ii. 207.
 Murray, Dorothy, grandmother of J. M. F., i. 3.
 Napoleon, Louis, i. 145-147, 169, 247, 252, 253, 262, 280; ii. 56, 107, 108, 244.
 National Finances, see Finances, National.
 Naushon Island, i. 13, 16-27, 66, 159, 160, 163, 168-170, 319, 321, 322; ii. 108, 110-112, 162, 213, 218, 219, 227, 234-237.
 Navy, compared with merchant marine, i. 221-224.
 Nebraska Bill, the, i. 155.
 New England Loyal Publication Society, formation of, i. 324-329; ii. 70, 144.
 Newspapers:
 "Anti-Slavery Standard," ii. 156, 157.
 "Boston Daily Advertiser," i. 309; ii. 83.
 "Louisville Courier," i. 202, 203.
 "Nation," ii. 144.
 "New Bedford Mercury," i. 314.
 "New York Herald," organ of seceders, i. 254, 279, 286, 312.
 "New York Evening Post," letter from J. M. F., i. 219, 220; 240, 281, 284, letter from J. M. F., 285, 286; 314, 318, 324, 325; ii. 144-146.
 "New York Times," ii. 102.
 "New York Tribune," i. 289, 290, 324.
 Nordhoff, Charles, editor of "New York Evening Post," ii. 144.
 Norton, Charles E., work on Sanitary Commission, i. 268; manages Loyal Publication Society, 328, 329.
 Noyes, William Curtis, letters from J. M. F. as to Loyal Publication Society, i. 324-327.
 Ogden, W. B., i. 120.
 "Old Scrap Book, An," i. 29, 30; ii. 224-227.

- Olmsted, F. Law : work on Sanitary Commission, i. 265-274 ; ii. 75.
- Olsen, Charles, captain of launch Coryell, ii. 237.
- Ossawatimie, battle of ; description by John Brown, i. 180, 181.
- Overend & Gurney, bankers, ii. 14, 15.
- Packard, Colonel, i. 211.
- Palmerston, Lord, ii. 19, 31, 36, 58, 93, 94.
- Parker, Theodore, i. 36.
- Parrott, R., gunmaker at West Point, ii. 79.
- Pate, Henry Clay, i. 181.
- Paulding, Commodore Hiram, i. 173.
- Peabody, Miss Elizabeth P., anecdote of, i. 21 ; 65.
- Peace Congress of February, 1861, i. 187-201 ; ii. 104.
- Pearson, Captain Charles, of ship *Luconia*, i. 87.
- Pease, Henry, M. P., ii. 14.
- Pease, Joseph, president of Peace Society in England, ii. 10.
- Pease, Joshua, ii. 14.
- Peck, Mrs. Elizabeth, ancestress of J. M. F., i. 3.
- Peirce, Professor Benjamin, ii. 141.
- Peirson, Adjutant C. L., imprisoned at Richmond, i. 259.
- Perkins, Charles E., president of Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad, ii. 212, 213, 216, 217, 224, 239, 240.
- Perkins, James, uncle of J. M. F., i. 39, 53.
- Perkins, Mrs. James, i. 89.
- Perkins, J. H., cousin of J. M. F., in Perkins & Co., i. 54, 55, 58.
- Perkins, Margaret, mother of J. M. F., i. 3, 39. See also Forbes, Mrs. Ralph Bennet.
- Perkins, Samuel G., uncle of J. M. F., i. 39.
- Perkins, Colonel T. H., uncle of J. M. F., i. 39, 51, 53, 117.
- Perry, Commodore, expedition to Japan, i. 132.
- Philbrick, E. S., educates negroes on Sea Islands, ii. 70, 71.
- Phillips, Wendell, i. 33 ; speaks at Faneuil Hall meeting, 100 ; 174 ; reference to J. M. F.'s foresight, 204, 205 ; visits Milton, 227 ; correspondence with J. M. F., ii. 156-159.
- Pierce, E. L., head of Educational Commission, i. 294, 296, 301.
- Pierce, H. L., ii. 184.
- Pitt, William, i. 339.
- Platt, Senator T. C., ii. 197.
- Pollock, Baron, ii. 46, 47.
- Porter, Admiral D. D., i. 321 ; ii. 117.
- Postell, —, first lieutenant of rebel privateer, i. 217.
- Potter, Thomas, ii. 19.
- Purvis, Robert, ii. 227.
- Putnam, Dr. George, i. 36.
- Putnam, "Preceptor," master of Franklin Academy, Andover, i. 43.
- Quakers, English, J. M. F.'s appeal to them in behalf of peace, ii. 9-15, 16.
- Quay, Senator M. S., ii. 202.
- Quincy, George, enlisting officer, i. 334.
- Quincy market men, offer to furnish fresh meats for troops, i. 213, 214.
- Railroads :
 Chicago, Burlington and Quincy, i. 138, 160-164, 168, 170 ; ii. 114, 211-217, 224, 239, 240.
 Erie, i. 167.
 Hannibal and St. Joseph, i. 138, 177.
 Michigan Central, i. 119, 120, 160, 163, 165, 167, 168, 170 ; ii. 212.
 New York Central, i. 167.
 Sault Ste. Marie, i. 252, 257.
 Southern Michigan, i. 167.
- Rathbone, William, of Liverpool, England, ii. 7, 8, 19 ; letter from J. M. F., 59-63 ; 91-95 ; letter to J. M. F. on free trade, 222-224.
- Rathbone, S. G., ii. 223.
- Raymond, H. J., chairman of National Committee, ii. 102.
- Reconstruction, ii. 141-152, 155-158, 178-183.
- Revere, Mary, i. 4.
- Revere, Major Paul J., imprisoned at Richmond, i. 259.
- Ripley, George, of the "New York Tribune," i. 289-290.
- Robbins, Dr. Edward H., practical joke of J. M. F.'s, i. 123-126.

- Robbins, Mrs. Elizabeth Murray, great aunt of J. M. F., i. 4.
 Robertson, Alexander, guest of J. M. F. at Macao, i. 82.
 Robinson, G. D., elected Governor of Massachusetts, ii. 204.
 Robinson, William S., see "War-rington's Pen Portraits."
 Rodgers, General, i. 315.
 Rodman, Thomas J., ii. 16.
 Roebuck, John A., ii. 36, 37, 54, 55.
 Rogers, Dr. S., ii. 177.
 Rogers, Major, ii. 162.
 Rogers, Henry B., member of Loyal Publication Society, i. 328.
 Rogers, Prof. W. B., member of Loyal Publication Society, i. 328.
 Ropes, J. S., ii. 185.
 Rosecrans, General W. S., ii. 63.
 Ruffin, Thomas, of North Carolina, member of Peace Congress, i. 191.
 Russell, Colonel Henry S., marries Mary H. Forbes, ii. 4; 39, 52, 103, 117, 137.
 Russell, Mrs. Henry S. (see also Forbes, Mary Hathaway), ii. 4, 39, 117, 137.
 Russell, James S., ii. 117, 235.
 Russell, Lord John, i. 251, 253; ii. 8, 18, 22, 36, 57, 168, 170, 243.
 Russell, Nathaniel, of Plymouth, goes to Farrandville with J. M. F., i. 91-97.
 Russell, William, i. 294.
 Russell & Co., i. 61-64; 70-72, 87, 90, 91, 98, 165, 172; ii. 133, 143, 211, 212, 225.
 Sanborn, Frank, i. 179.
 Sanitary Commission, National, organization of, i. 263-274; 320; ii. 70.
 Sargent, Professor Charles S., ii. 234.
 "Satanic Press," the, i. 280, 282, 286, 289.
 Saturday Club, the, i. 34; ii. 87, 88.
 Saxton, General Rufus, i. 313; ii. 178.
 Schley, —, i. 137.
 Schofield, General J. M., i. 10.
 Schools: Miss Polly Crane, i. 40; Master Pierce, 40; Franklin Academy, Andover, 43; Round Hill School, Northampton, 43-52.
 Schurz, Carl, ii. 192.
 Scott, Russell, ii. 17.
 Scott, Sir Walter, J. M. F.'s admiration for the works of, i. 18, 27, 31.
 Scott, General Winfield, approves plan for relief of Fort Sumter, i. 193-197; 198; instructions to Governor Andrew as to route of troops, 205-206; 226, 227.
 Seddon, James A., of Virginia, member of Peace Congress, i. 191.
 Sedgwick, Charles B., comment on Peace Congress, i. 201; 282, 308, 309; correspondence with J. M. F., 315-317, 319-322; letter to J. M. F. on Emancipation Proclamation, etc., 344-346; 352; ii. 1, 2; letter to J. M. F. on pay of colored troops, 83, 84; letter on enrollment bill, 96, 97; 101, 107; visit to Naushon, 110; 156.
 Sedgwick, Mrs. Charles B., i. 319, 322.
 Seelye, J. H., ii. 187.
 Semmes, Raphael, commander of Alabama, ii. 113, 171.
 Senior, Mrs. Nassau J., ii. 38, 39; letter from J. M. F. on Alabama claims, 167, 170.
 Senior, Nassau William, i. 141, 142-144, 183, 184; correspondence with J. M. F., 245-257; 260-263; ii. 2, 19, 37, 38, 168.
 Sever, Captain J. W., of ship Alert, i. 65.
 Seward, William H., i. 173, 183, 184; J. M. F.'s objections to, 185; Sumner's opinion of, 186; 189; imprisons mayor of Baltimore, 190; 197; prophesies end of war in sixty days, 198; 219, 220, 221, 225, 237, 244, 325, 337, 338, 342, 343, 344; resigns from cabinet, but is recalled, 346; ii. 3, 40, 44, 73, 78, 89, 101, 102, 118, 132; retirement from office, 166; 240-244.
 Seymour, Governor Horatio, i. 338; ii. 55.
 Shaw, Francis G., ii. 50-52.
 Shaw, Josephine, see Lowell, Mrs. C. R.
 Shaw, Colonel Robert G., commands colored regiment, i. 324; ii. 52, 54; killed at Fort Wagner, 67, 68; monument on Boston Common, 68; 115.

- Sheridan, General P. H., ii. 98, 109; letter about Colonel C. R. Lowell, 113, 114; 211, 244.
- Sherman, Senator John, i. 242; Presidential campaign of 1880, ii. 194.
- Sherman, General William T., ii. 119, 121, 128; takes Charleston, 136; grand review at Washington, 140; 178, 211, 244.
- Ships:
- Cambridge, i. 215-218.
 - Flying Childers, i. 137.
 - Jamestown, i. 121.
 - Massachusetts, i. 118.
 - Pembroke, i. 215-218.
- See also Alabama, Alexandra, Ironclads, Kearsarge, Merrimac, Meteor, Monitor, and Yachts.
- Simmons, W. A., collector of the port of Boston, ii. 185, 186.
- Simms, —, colored editor, ii. 178.
- Slidell, John, Confederate ambassador, i. 245; seizure of 259; 284; ii. 36.
- Smalls, Robert, escaped slave, i. 303.
- Smith, Chauncey, solicitor of War Department, ii. 68.
- Smith, Goldwin, i. 8; ii. 40, 108; visits Naushon, 110-112; 118, 132; letter to J. M. F. on Alabama case, etc., 151, 152.
- Smith, Captain John, ii. 112.
- Smith, Captain Jonathan, commanding yacht Azalea, i. 303.
- Sprague, Horatio, U. S. Consul at Gibraltar, i. 70.
- Stanton, Edwin M., independence and energy of, i. 280; 282, 288, 289; controls telegraph, 291; 308, 332, 345, 353; letter to J. M. F. on enlistment of colored soldiers, ii. 68-70; 82, 134.
- Stearns, Major G. L., recruiting officer, ii. 63.
- Stedman, Dr. C. E., ii. 235, 236.
- Stephens, Alexander H., Vice-President of Southern Confederacy, i. 349.
- Stevens, Lieutenant, on S. S. Cambridge, i. 216.
- Stevens, General Isaac L., in command at Beaufort, S. C., i. 305, 306.
- Stewart, Mrs., i. 83.
- Stewart, Governor D., of Missouri, visits Milton, i. 182.
- Stoeckel, Baron, Russian Ambassador, i. 188.
- Stone, Mrs. Lucy, ii. 205.
- Stone, Miss M., i. 322.
- Stowe, Mrs. Harriet B., i. 142, 143.
- Sturgis, Henry, i. 73.
- Sturgis, Mrs. Henry, i. 85.
- Sturgis, James P., i. 3, 64.
- Sturgis, Russell, i. 145, 146.
- Sturgis, Captain William, i. 37, 38, 56, 114, 165-167, 168.
- Sumner, Charles, i. 8, 173, 185; letter concerning Seward, 186; opinion of W. P. Fessenden, 281; letter from J. M. F. on the Educational Commission and the negro question, 300-302; letters from J. M. F. on emancipation, and bribery of senators, 317-319; correspondence with J. M. F. on Proclamation of Emancipation, 348-353; letter from J. M. F., ii. 58, 59; belligerent speech, 59, 60; 73, 75, 76, 84, 119, 125, 155, 167, 170; supports Greeley's candidacy, 178; letter from J. M. F., 178-183; 187, 208.
- Sumter, Fort, see Fort Sumter.
- Swain, "Governor" W. W., i. 16, 25, 67; adventure with runaway horse, 107; joins J. M. F. in buying Naushon, 159; 166, 167.
- Swain, Mrs. W. W., i. 107.
- Swift, Captain W. H., i. 188, 200.
- Tariff Reform League; address of J. M. F. on free ships, ii. 221, 222.
- Telegrams: to Colonel Keyes, as to route of troops bound South, i. 207; to Colonel Richard Borden, as to transporting troops South, i. 207, 208, 209, 211; from Colonel Richard Borden on the same subject, i. 209; from S. P. Chase, desiring interview with J. M. F., ii. 4.
- Thayer, Professor J. B., i. 14; Secretary of Loyal Publication Society, 325, 328, 329.
- Thayer, John E., joins in purchase of Michigan Central Railroad, i. 119.
- Thayer, W. S., i. 325.

- Thomas, General G. H., ii. 121, 128, 178, 179, 244.
- Tilden, S. J., Democratic candidate for presidency, ii. 186.
- Tobey, Samuel Boyd, ii. 14.
- Tocqueville, Alexis de, i. 247.
- Tocqueville, Madame Alexis de, i. 185, 245, 246.
- Toucey, Isaac, Secretary of the Navy, i. 197, 243.
- Tree-planting, i. 105, 106; ii. 231, 234.
- Trent question, the, i. 254, 259-263, 284; ii. 242, 243.
- Trumbull, W., i. 149, 242.
- Twitchell, —, ii. 84.
- Upton, George B., i. 196; transport of troops, 208; 342, 343.
- Vallandigham, C. L., ii. 102, 103.
- Van Buren, Dr., i. 267.
- Volunteer navy, advocated by J. M. F., i. 219-225; bill for, 227, 228.
- Voorhees, Senator D. W., ii. 182.
- Walker, Robert J., former Secretary of the Treasury under President Polk, ii. 42, 43, 53.
- Walker, T., i. 296.
- Wanamaker, John, Postmaster-General under President Harrison, ii. 202.
- Ward, Captain, in the navy, i. 196.
- Ward, Captain E. B., ii. 84, 153, 154.
- Ward, George C., ii. 50, 110, 133.
- Ward, S. G., Boston agent of Baring Bros. & Co., i. 170; work on Sanitary Commission, 268; member of Loyal Publication Society, 328; ii. 68.
- Ware, Miss Emma F., i. 32, 322.
- Ware, Mrs. Henry, ii. 234.
- Ware, Dr. Robert, visits refugees at Fort Monroe, i. 266.
- "Warrington's Pen Portraits: " account of J. M. F.'s methods, i. 10, 11.
- Washington, Peace Congress held at, i. 188-201; J. M. F. and family spend winter there, ii. 125-141.
- Waters, B. F., member of Peace Congress, i. 188.
- Watson, R. S., i. 66.
- Webster, Daniel, i. 33; sends circular to China merchants, 115; 118, 132, 142, 154, 171.
- Webster, General J. D., tells story about a Confederate spy, ii. 128-131.
- Weed, Thurlow, editor of "Albany Evening Journal," i. 244, 346; ii. 101, 102.
- Weiss, Rev. John, writes epitaph on "Johnny Crapaud," i. 108-111; ii. 110.
- Welles, Gideon, Secretary of the Navy, authorizes cruise of the Cambridge after privateer, i. 216; doubts safety of giving commissions to merchant sailors, 221; 230, 231, 243, 289, 290; commissions J. M. F. to charter vessels, 292, 293; 342, 343; sends J. M. F. and W. H. Aspinwall on mission to England to prevent sailing of Confederate cruisers, ii. 5-7; letter from J. M. F., 21, 22; letter to J. M. F., 23-26; letters from W. H. Aspinwall and J. M. F. concerning mission, 40, 41, 44-48; 64-66, 204.
- White, Captain, of ship Flying Childers, i. 137.
- White, James S., supposititious writer of letter, i. 124-126.
- White, R. G., ii. 87.
- Whitehouse, William, i. 123, 124, 126.
- Whittier, John G., i. 350; ii. 87, 88; letter from J. M. F. on Butler's election, 203, 204; 211; letter to J. M. F., 226, 227.
- Wigglesworth, T., square dealing of, i. 91.
- Wilkes, Admiral Charles, ii. 45.
- Williams, John Earl, of the New York Metropolitan Bank, i. 10.
- Wilmot Proviso, the, i. 171, 172.
- Wilson, Senator Henry, brings forward bill for reorganizing Medical Bureau, i. 267; 319; ii. 121, 155.
- Winslow, Captain J. A., commander of Kearsarge, ii. 72.
- Wolcott, J., Huntington, president of Sanitary Commission, i. 264.
- Wood, Fernando, ii. 103.
- Wool, General John E., member of Peace Congress, i. 188.
- Wyman, Jeffries, i. 8, 137.

Yachts:

Ariel, i. 112-115.

Azalea, i. 13, 159, 160, 303, 306,
307; ii. 104, 111.

Rambler, ii. 170-173.

Wild Duck, i. 13; ii. 231, 232, 235-
237.

ELECTROTYPED AND PRINTED
BY H. O. HOUGHTON AND CO.

The Riverside Press

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